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FRIDAY 29 MARCH 1996 40p (IR 45p)

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The man who can't catch Aids

Discovery may lead to vaccine

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Scientists have found a man who cannot catch the virus that causes Aids - and his blood may hold the key to developing the first vaccine.

In his blood the New Yorker Steve Crohn has the first known substance in the world that will defeat the HIV virus. Scientists already knew of many individuals who remain healthy for a very long time between infection with HIV and developing full-blown Aids. The difference in the case of Mr Crohn is that he appears to be resistant to infection with HIV in the first place.

Mr Crohn, 49, a freelance editor for Fodor's Travel Guides, and another New Yorker who also appears to be immune, were discovered by a young Glaswegian scientist, Dr Bill Paxton, of the Aaron Diamond Aids Research Center, in New York. Dr Paxton and his colleagues have found a further 23 people who, although not completely immune, show some degree of resistance to HIV infection. Many of these individuals have remained free of HIV despite a history of unsafe sex with multiple sexual partners who subsequently died of Aids.

From these individuals, Dr Paxton and his colleagues have taken the white blood cells - known as CD4 cells - which are the particular target of HIV, cul-

tured the cells in the laboratory, and tried unsuccessfully to infect them with HIV. In the case of Mr Crohn's cells, the researchers could only get the infection to "take" by flooding the cultured cells with huge amounts of virus - far more than would be present in the course of a naturally occurring form of infection.

There have been indications that some people might be resistant to HIV infection, because of the chance shuffling of the genes they inherited from their parents. Some prostitutes in Africa have remained HIV free despite frequent unsafe heterosexual encounters in countries where the rate of HIV infection is very high.

However, this evidence is only statistical. The new research has identified specific individuals and their biochemistry to work out the precise mechanism of resistance.

Dr Paxton said yesterday, "If we can determine what is protecting these people, then you can envisage therapy or vaccine design."

Dr Paxton and his colleagues have already identified one set of biochemical compounds, known as chemokines, which appear to be acting in these people to defeat HIV. These substances were first recognised only five years ago and appear to play a role in the immune system - the body's defence against invading bacteria and

viruses. They report their findings in the April issue of the scientific journal *Nature Medicine*.

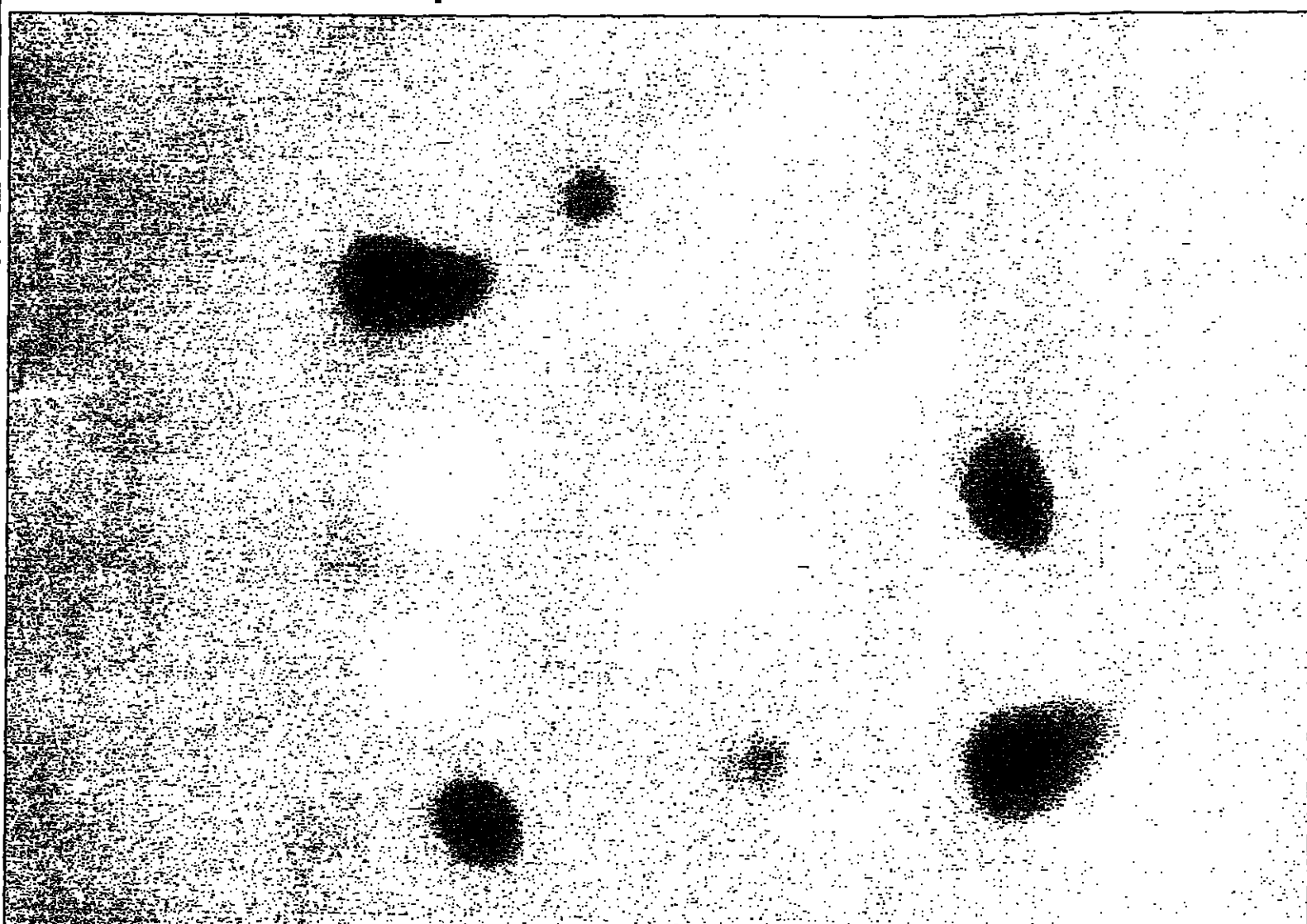
Conventional vaccines consist of antibodies to the infecting agent produced by the immune system but, partly because HIV subverts the cells of the immune system itself and partly because it is highly variable, no one has succeeded in producing a vaccine against it. The chemokines Dr Paxton and his colleagues have found are not antibodies. They are involved in the "inflammatory" response - when a wound or site of infection become inflamed.

"I do not believe that next week everybody will be injecting chemokines and curing Aids, but definitely we're on a line," Dr Paxton said.

Dr Paxton stressed that any vaccine or treatment was still a long way off. "I'm really worried about how people will take this news - people should not give up a safe-sex policy."

For Mr Crohn, the thought that his blood might hold a vital secret in the battle against Aids "would be very touching to me". His partner, Jerry Greenwood, died of Aids in 1982, before the disease even had a name. "I haven't had a partner since," Mr Crohn said. "I've had affairs and several of the people I went with have died." To the prospect that a vaccine might be based on his blood, Mr Crohn could say only, "this is kind of wonderful".

Scientists capture the colours of creation



Hot spots: The Cambridge University telescope image showing traces of the Big Bang in the night sky and (right) its position in relation to the stars

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

The different colours in this picture represent a breakthrough by British technicians - and our clearest picture yet of the origins of the universe.

The range of colours here represent a total temperature difference of just 0.00001 degree Centigrade, in a part of the night sky which reveals distant echoes of the Big Bang. It was captured by CAT, a new radio-telescope designed by physicists at Cambridge University and situated near the city.

Scientists have long theo-

rised that when the universe came into being, about 15 billion years ago, the galaxies began to form where matter and energy were clumped together. Such variations in density should show up as different temperatures in the sky, since the universe was enormously hot at its birth. Space is not completely cold: in fact it has an effective temperature of 2.7C above absolute zero, where activity stops entirely. But the variations are now tiny.

In 1992, the US space agency NASA offered definitive evidence of this, when its COBE satellite produced a picture of

the entire sky, showing "ripples" in its temperature, confirming the theories and giving a broad glimpse of the after-effects of the Big Bang.

This picture shows those ripples in far greater detail than COBE did, from a time when the universe was only about 300,000 years old. CAT is 40 times more sensitive to temperature variations than COBE, yet cost a fraction as much - £250,000, rather than \$300m. Rather than a satellite, the team used three radio antennae, each 70 centimetres wide and two metres apart. This let them filter out the atmospheric effects



that usually trouble ground-based experiments.

Following the success of the work the British Government has agreed to fund a £2.5m array of 10 such antennae, which will be based on Mount Teide in Tenerife. The new telescope, known as the "Very Small Ar-

ray", will be used to help to answer more detailed questions - about the age of the universe, its rate of expansion, and two key questions: how much unseen, or "dark", matter is out there, and how the galaxies formed at all.

The red comet, page 11

10 suicides after child abuse case

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

Ten young people killed themselves following their experiences at the hands of sex abusers in care homes in Cwylid, according to the independent report into the scandal, suppressed by the county council.

The deaths are highlighted in the unpublished report's summary, where it calls for a full public judicial inquiry under local government legislation.

Sources also revealed that the inquiry team, led by John Jilling, former director of social services in Derbyshire, has called in the report for the North Wales police force to submit to an investigation by the

Police Complaints Authority. After a threat from its insurers that negligence cover could be revoked, Cwylid council put a block on publication of the 300-page report and gagged councillors from even revealing the call for a public inquiry.

The new disclosures come as North Wales Police signalled its readiness to get a High Court order to force Cwylid to release files on up to 30 young people as part of a fresh investigation into the activities of a local carer of children with a previous conviction for indecent assault.

In this second instance of Cwylid refusing to release crucial information about one of Britain's worst child abuse scandals, the council insists it is

obliged to claim public interest immunity in relation to the documentation.

Officers want the files to trace the young people who were in care in Cwylid as children. The inquiry could eventually spread to other parts of the country, where the individual has had past responsibility for the care of about 1,000 young people.

Ron Davies, shadow Secretary of State for Wales, has written to William Hague, the Secretary of State, urging him to place the Jilling report in the House of Commons library - but no response from the Welsh Office had emerged last night. Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, last night

tabled a Commons motion calling on Mr Hague to honour a pledge made in September 1992 by Gwyn Jones, a Welsh Office minister, to hold a public inquiry after allegations were made against social services staff and police officers.

David Owen, former Chief Constable of the North Wales force, also backed such an investigation once criminal trials had been concluded.

The Jilling report is also understood to make reference to "prominent" people being involved in the scandal, but says that it had neither the resources nor the authority to address that suggestion.

Most of the young people referred to in the report are said

to have taken their own lives. Where children's interests were in conflict with the authorities, the report says: "We have found that in many cases the interests of institutions and professions have come first instead."

One North Wales source last night put the number of consequential deaths at more like 16, with young people hanging themselves, overdosing on drugs, slashing their throats or wrists and jumping off bridges or roofs.

But there was at least one coroner's verdict that one young man had been unlawfully killed in a fire. Some of the suicide cases were key witnesses in the criminal trials that followed the first police investigation.

BT in talks on £35bn merger

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

BT and Cable & Wireless are in talks which could lead to a £35bn merger - the largest in UK corporate history and considerably bigger than last year's £9.3bn merger of the Glaxo and Wellcome drugs groups.

The merger discussions were confirmed last night by C&W, which is worth more than £11bn, after weeks of stock market speculation over the on-off relationship between the rival companies.

The merger would require Government permission and would inevitably result in the disposal of Mercury Communications, C&W's UK subsidiary and the single biggest competitor for BT.

The admission from C&W followed feverish rumours in the City, which were accompanied by surges in the share price of both groups. The company said that the talks were "exploratory" and "may or may not lead to a merger".

BT confirmed last night that talks between the two companies' advisers had taken place.

Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, is believed to have held talks since the end of last year with Brian Smith, C&W's chairman, and Rod Olsen, acting chief executive. His approach followed Cable & Wireless' descent into chaos after a bitter boardroom struggle.

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Comment, page 25

The WORLD
of OLIVER
& CLAIRE

SIT DOWN WITH A NICE
CUP OF TEA AND ENJOY
THEM ON PAGE 30.



In Section Two
Your complete
guide to the arts,
entertainment
and television
and radio in the
next seven days

IN BRIEF

Soldiers guilty

Three British soldiers were found guilty yesterday of killing a young Danish woman in Cyprus. The court in Larnaca said that Allan Ford, 28, from Birmingham, Justin Fowler, 28, from Falmouth and Geoff Fennell, 24, from Oldbury, had committed manslaughter, conspired to rape and abduction in 1994. They will be sentenced next week.

Schools choice

All schools could be offered the chance to become fully selective in a White Paper that will be published in June. Page 3



Major seeks European deal to end beef crisis

COLIN BROWN

John Major will today demand the lifting of the worldwide ban on British beef at the European summit in Turin in return for a package of measures to destroy millions of cows and compensate farmers, in the hope of restoring consumer confidence.

The first steps in a massive selective slaughter programme began last night when Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, announced a series of interim measures aimed at restoring confidence and persuading the European Commission to lift the ban.

They included an immediate ban on the sale of meat from

newly slaughtered cattle over 30 months old; extending specified bovine offal (SBO) controls to stop possibly infected cattle heads and lymph glands entering the food chain; £1.5m a week compensation to the rendering industry; and £50m a year in EU aid for the slaughter of bull calves up to 10 days old.

The hard-bargaining was already under way on the British package on the eve of today's summit between European Commission and British officials, led by Richard Packer, permanent secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture. Mr Hogg will meet Franz Fischler, the European Commissioner in Brussels today.

The final deal could be reached at a meeting of agriculture ministers on Monday. But Mr Major's key demand will be for the early lifting of the ban, which ministers believe is the only hope of rebuilding consumer confidence.

The Prime Minister will be seeking a cut in Britain's annual contributions to the EU to pay for the compensation, which could amount to £500m a year for farmers.

The package, approved by the Cabinet yesterday, will include selective destruction of cows, and could last for years.

The BSE affair, described by one official as a "huge crisis", is certain to dominate the formal opening of the conference.

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news

Fast-track Bill to combat terrorists

DONALD MACINTYRE

The Government is planning to introduce a new raft of fast-track legislation to tighten security in the wake of IRA's decision to end the ceasefire and renew its bombing campaign.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, yesterday held private discussions with opposition spokesmen in the hope of securing cross-party support for legislation as early as next week.

The move follows representation by police to put tightened security checks – particularly on passengers using public transport – on a firmer statutory footing and to strengthen stop and search powers in relation to suspected terrorist offences.

Details of the discussions were being kept confidential last night but ministers are believed to be seeking to secure the new powers before the Easter recess which begins next

Thursday. This would almost certainly only be possible if the Government had cross-party support, including that of Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary who took part in yesterday's discussions.

Labour has been careful not to obstruct the Government on counter-terrorism measures and the party earlier this month shifted its stance towards the Prevention of Terrorism Act by deciding to abstain on the issue.

although 25 Labour MPs defied the leadership and opposed the renewal of the Act. For the previous 12 years Labour had opposed the renewal of the Act on the grounds that it suspended civil liberties with powers of detention without trial, and orders to exclude Northern Ireland from mainland Britain.

Substantially tighter security checks have already been introduced at Britain's 27 ports, along with greater use of closed-

circuit television. Police have a filmed record of the 7,000 vehicles coming into the country each day. Security checks have generally been tightened on passengers, luggage and vehicles passing through ferry ports, the Channel Tunnel and connecting railways.

But the police have also been pressing for measures to ensure that the newly tightened security is on a firm legal footing. One possibility is for vehicle

checks to be underpinned statutorily by an amendment to the Maritime Shipping and Aviation Act. But if there were cross-party support the required package could also be introduced under a simple piece of primary legislation.

Yesterday's talks are understood to have involved Alan Beith, the Liberal Democrats Law and Order spokesman, and Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionists' Security spokesman.

The SDLP and the Welsh and Scottish nationalists have also been informed.

The Intelligence and Security Committee said it would also investigate possible gaps in intelligence which may have helped lead to the Docklands bombing in February. The committee will also examine whether MI5 should be given the lead over police in Northern Ireland for counter-terrorism, as it has in the mainland.

IN BRIEF

Harrods make new claim against school

Harrods claimed in court that its reputation for all things excellent was in danger of being polluted by the "bad odour" of a sex scandal at a south London prep school.

The Knightsbridge store has asked the Court of Appeal to ban the prep from calling itself The Harroddian School on the grounds that it is passing itself off as having some connection with Harrods and trying to cash in on the company's good will. The judgement was expected yesterday, but in the meantime, Harrods came up with fresh evidence – press cuttings relating how the school's owner, Sir Alfred Hounslow-Boswell, had sacked his wife Elaine as headmistress after she had an affair with a teacher.

Water bills promise

A water company with some of the highest charges in the country says that it will no longer disconnect domestic customers who do not pay up. South West Water will employ more debt counsellors and managers to help customers with financial difficulties, but will take court action against non-payers.

Holiday habits

Young male holidaymakers now seek sophistication rather than sun, sand and sex while on foreign trips, says a new survey. Pubbing, clubbing and sunbathing are very much out, as 18-34 year old British men opt for sport and cultural activities, reveal brewers Heineken.

Asbestos ruling

Judgment has been reserved in the Court of Appeal bid by engineering company T&N to overturn a High Court ruling that it must pay damages over two cancer victims who as children played in the drifts of white dust which blanketed the roads around their homes. The decision last year was the first time a court had awarded compensation for asbestos claims made by anyone other than workers.

Rugby player appeal

A rugby player who received the longest jail sentence ever imposed for on-field violence can appeal. But Gloucester lock Simon Devereux, 27, who was convicted of grievous bodily harm against an opponent and jailed for nine months, was refused bail by the Court of Appeal judge.

Collins quits band

Phil Collins has finally quit Genesis after more than 20 years as their lead singer. It has been revealed. The multi-instrumentalist, drummer, singer and songwriter has decided to concentrate full time on his solo career. Album sales have topped 80 million since Collins, 45, took over as the band's singer from Peter Dinklage who quit in 1975.

Skeletons dug up

Quarry workers have unearthed the remains of at least a dozen humans who may have been ritually killed 4,000 years ago. The bodies, which include children, were found in an ancient channel of the River Trent in Nottinghamshire and date from the late neolithic or early bronze age, between 2,000 and 2,350 BC.

The BSE risk: Ministers ponder logistics of mass slaughter as authorities reveal death of another victim

Doubt over vets' role in killing

JAMES CUSICK and PAUL FIELD

The co-operation of Britain's veterinary surgeons in any planned mass slaughter of cattle aimed at eliminating BSE was yesterday put in serious doubt.

Bob Stevenson, president of the British Veterinary Association, said crucial to the success of any mass slaughter would be the supervision of the killing by both Ministry of Agriculture vets and private practice vets. He said the public would demand that vets were present to see that the killings were humane and that adequate precautions on the further spread of the disease were taken.

However Mr Stevenson said that calls for a mass slaughter meant "science was being left behind" and was an unnecessary sacrifice. "I would like to think vets would co-operate. But

SLAUGHTER

there is serious question over whether many will have anything to do with this."

He added: "In 1967 both government vets and private practice vets formed a cohesive force to deal with foot and mouth disease. Today that cohesion does not exist."

In Cheshire a vet, Francis Anthony, said: "There will be no co-operation from the veterinary profession. Unless this slaughter is supervised by vets, the public will not be reassured about anything."

Mr Anthony said colleagues, who studied the relevant scientific evidence, believed mass slaughter was unnecessary. "We are being asked to take part in a Frankensteinian slaughter."

If the Government do a U-turn on their response to the BSE crisis the most likely option would be the culling of old-

er cows, as proposed by the NFU – some 15,000 a week for three years.

The logistical difficulties facing the Government are enormous.

Ministers have so far not ruled out the prospect of burying carcasses in authorised dumps or using household incinerators. MAFF has admitted the removal and destruction of older cows from the food chain which could see mass pits being dug on farms, animals shot with a bolt pistol and their carcasses burnt, is an option.

There are only nine incineration plants in Britain licensed to handle around 1,000 cattle a week. These are already destroying 300 cows infected with BSE each week. Only 7 per cent of the older cows earmarked for culling could be coped with, a shortfall of around 750,000 head per year if the NFU proposal is adopted.

The use of household incinerators was dismissed by Phil Burns, of HM Pollution Inspectorate: "The sheer practicalities make it impossible. They are designed to burn paper and plastic not a tonne of meat."

Emission standards from 15 of the 35 domestic waste incinerators in Britain have failed to meet EU standards and are expected to be shut down by the end of the year.

However the Licensed Animal Slaughterers and Salvage Association, is convinced that if the NFU plans were reduced, incinerators could cope with around 3,000 a week, operating around the clock, seven days a week.

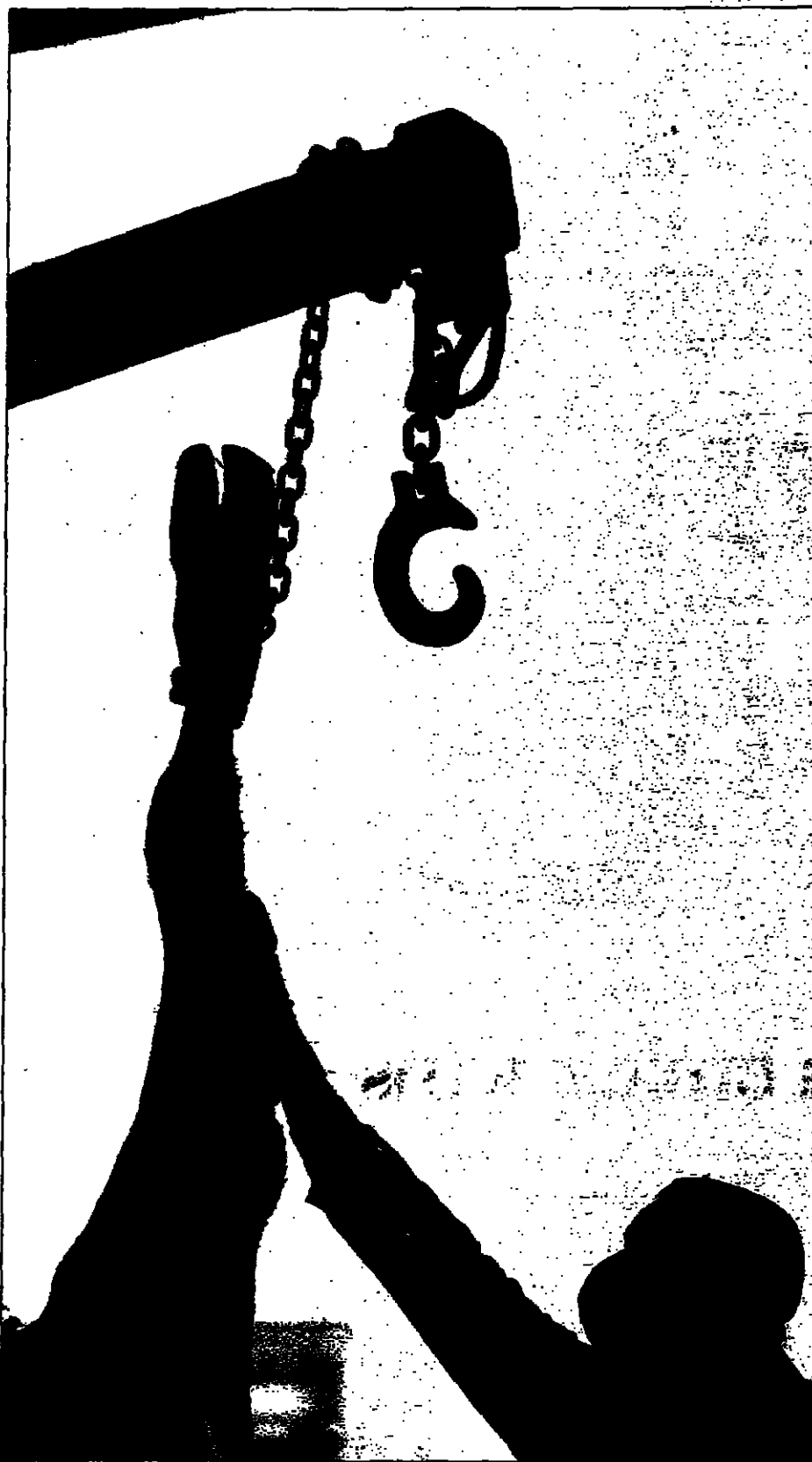
Chris Ashworth, technical adviser, said dairy cows at the end of their life should be culled and only those from herds with a confirmed BSE case in the past three years.

"That would bring the figure down to between 100,000 and 150,000 a year. That number would decline over five years to around 50,000 a year. We could cope with that."

Voodoo casts its spell over The Science

In an average week wild horses could not drag most MPs to agriculture questions. It is bad enough having odd bits of farming chucked into the middle of *The Archers*, interrupting the adulteries and alcoholism with bolted-on conversations concerning feed prices and farrowing. In the House, the "sons-of-the-soil" self-image and continual complaining of the representatives of British agri-business are more than most human flesh can bear.

But where wild horses have failed in the past, yesterday mad cows succeeded. After all the average Labour member's only contact with livestock is the local city farm, (usually comprising three old goats, a gaggle of bad-tempered geese and a sow called



Hanging in the balance: A BSE-infected cow is prepared for burning at a government-registered incineration plant near Cambridge. Photograph: Brian Harris



DAVID AARONOVITCH

Arthur). So Opposition MPs mustered instead to represent that significant section of the electorate which depends on eating food for its survival.

That agriculture is a priority for Tories is reflected in the calibre of their ministerial team. The brilliant but choleric Douglas Hogg, with his strange forehead (two odd

vertical creases run parallel to his hairline, making it look as though the back and sides of his head have been added quite recently) and small face, has held his notorious temper in check for an entire crisis now.

His second-in-command, Angela Browning, has sensible short hair with sensible voice and manner to match, and is reassuringly broad in the beam. There are many more like her leading girls in choruses of "The Quarter-master's Stores" around campfires all over southern England.

Labour's team is not a success. Hogg's shadow, Gavin Strang, seems assailed with self-doubt and hesitation, as if continually asking himself why Labour should have an agriculture spokesman at

all. As with many in public life, the lower his confidence falls, the higher his voice becomes.

When he urged Labour's carefully thought-out eight-point action programme on BSE upon Mr Hogg, it reached dog-whistle pitch.

But the truth is that Labour is not really a big part of this business. Especially now that the focus is shifting to Europe, at whom Tony Blair cast the first brick. "The biggest problem imposed upon our food industry comes from the European Commission," he declared. Angela Browning agreed, referring to the "disgraceful decision of the scientists of Europe, based not on the science." Or The Science, as I suspect ministers now think of

it. In response to Nick Bagnall, she contrasted European practice with our own.

"In this country we take decisions based on The Science. In Europe they failed to do so." The implication was that our continent is The Religion, or The Voodoo that guides policy-making.

David Amess (Basildon) turned to his: "Essex fishermen are fed up with being allowed to catch only tiddlers, while the rest of Europe are allowed to catch whoppers."

Nicholas Winterton (Congleton) went further. What was being done to "keep pillaging Spanish fishermen out of our waters? What's sauce for the bloody goose is sauce for the gander?"

Scientist demands action to stop 'Russian roulette'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Urgent action to improve the study of the disease pattern of BSE in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans is needed, a leading biostatistician said yesterday.

Britain has been playing "Russian roulette with the odds", by allowing beef to be consumed from farms where cases of BSE have occurred, said Sheila Gore, a senior statistician at the Medical Research Council's Biostatistics Unit in Cambridge. The prevalence of infected cattle by age has not even been monitored by the random examination of cattle brains after slaughter, and any cull strategy must include such studies to establish the prevalence of BSE. "We must do that, rather than just burn the information," Dr Gore said. That was particularly important, given that more than half the infected cattle reported in 1995 were born after the ban on infected feed was imposed in 1988.

In a leading article in the *British Medical Journal*, Dr Gore said there is "the strongest case" for random pathology on slaughtered cattle, to establish what proportion are affected at what age and provide projections for the disease in animals. Much more detailed information about the 10 human cases of CJD – exactly when they occurred and at what age – must be published, to allow the "doubling time" of the epidemic to be established. The CJD Surveillance Unit, set up in 1990, has fulfilled its

RESEARCH

remotely "spectacularly and speedily" by identifying the 10 cases which led to last week's action, she says.

But the quality of epidemiological data being collected is nowhere near as good as that which Britain established for Aids and HIV. Now that the issue has become a public health rather than agricultural problem, the "signal failure" to provide good epidemiology must be remedied. That would allow better projections of the risks and the likely course of the two diseases.

Results from a study, which started seven years ago to establish whether dams can pass BSE to their offspring, must be released rapidly and every regulation covering BSE must be reviewed.

The study is being run as a blind trial, with researchers not knowing which calves came from cattle with the disease and which came from cattle which are free of it. Seven years on, it is now time to examine the results, which are crucial for projecting future levels of the disease in cattle, and which have implications for humans.

What, Dr Gore asks, is the evidence for excluding cattle under 30 months from the new de-boning and offal provision, when "some bovines under 30 months are certainly infected"?

"Let us have done with misleading the profession, the public and the press with unqualified 'no evidence' statements. All evidence must be quantified."

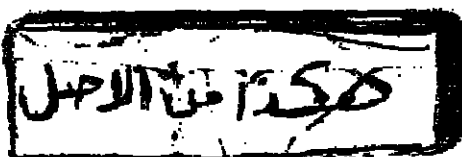
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Minister bows to grammar-school zeal

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

All schools could be offered the chance to become fully selective in a White Paper to be published in June, the Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Shephard, said yesterday.

In an apparent climbdown in the face of pressure from the Prime Minister, Mrs Shephard said that the move could mean a new grammar school in every town. John Major wants to distinguish clearly between the

Conservatives' education policy and Labour's, and his policy unit is keen to see the setting up of new, privately backed grammar schools.

Mrs Shephard denied rumours that there had been any rift between herself and Mr Major, but leaders of the teachers' unions claimed she had clearly been "whipped into line".

In a speech at the Institute of Education in London yesterday, Mrs Shephard promised a range of options aimed at increasing the proportion of

pupils which each school could select.

The Government has already raised the limit from 10 per cent to 15 per cent, but speaking after yesterday's lecture Mrs Shephard said a 100 per cent limit was a possibility. In a consultation on the 15 per cent limit, only 15 out of 1,500 organisations consulted said that they were in favour.

Rolling out a return to the old 11-plus system of selection, she said she had no particular figure in mind for the number of new grammar schools she wanted to see.

"We don't want to impose uniformity. We want schools to build on their own strengths. We do want to see more diversity and more selection if that's what parents and schools want," she said.

She and the Prime Minister were completely in agreement on the matter, she added, referring to newspaper speculation about a split. "There is no rift between us. It really has been a ludicrous period in our lives," she said.

This summer's White Paper

will propose an expansion of local management, which already gives schools control of between 85 per cent and 95 per cent of their budgets. It will also look at ways of encouraging more schools to opt out.

However, some of the proposals in the paper, including those on giving all schools the chance to move to full academic selection, would have to be manifesto pledges. There would be no time before the election to pass the legislation needed for extra selection in local au-

thority schools, Mrs Shephard said.

David Hart, the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said that the Secretary of State had been forced by Downing Street to toe the line.

"I can't believe for one moment that she is supporting the line that every city and town should have a grammar school."

"If the Government is trying to ensure that there is clear blue water between it and the Labour Party, I don't believe the

vast majority of parents will cast their vote on the basis of which party is prepared to support a greater amount of selection," he said.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "The Secretary of State has today demonstrated the Prime Minister's infinite capacity for making things worse. Mrs Shephard is about to plunge the entire school admission system in this country into utter chaos by reintroducing selection."



Feminist fury at academic's 'betrayal'

REBECCA FOWLER

A female academic has infuriated feminists with her controversial claim that women are still happy for their place in the home, surrounded by housework, while their male counterparts pursue high-powered careers.

Dr Catherine Hakim, a senior research fellow at the London School of Economics, claims that only one in three women are totally career-minded, one third do not want to work at all, and the rest try to combine both while believing domestic chores are mainly their responsibility.

In an unprecedented retaliation, a group of 11 eminent academics have signed a statement of protest. Dr Hakim has also been accused of failing to support her theories with research and not taking into account economic influences.

But in an acerbic response to her critics, Dr Hakim accuses them of ignoring differences in attitudes among women, many of whom she says have been let down by feminism. Defending her views in the *Journal of Sociology*, she claims that feminists have created misleading "myths", with a disproportionate focus on the needs of career women rather than housewives.

In her paper, entitled *Five Myths on Women's Employment*, Dr Hakim said most women believed in separate roles in marriage, with the man mainly responsible for bread-winning, and the wife tending the home.

She said: "The unpalatable truth is that a substantial proportion of women still accept the sexual division of labour, which sees homemaking as women's principal activity, and income-earning as men's principal activity in life."

Dr Hakim also said that there was no evidence that women with better educations and higher-paid jobs felt differently. She added: "If anything, the opposite is the case, as women can afford to choose between competing lifestyles."

In her own defence in the journal she said that studies across Europe suggested women had been forced into two groups, the career-minded or "grateful slaves". Dr Hakim said: "Some people believe I am being anti-feminist... all I am saying is that not every woman feels the same way."

Since she published her pronouncements, Dr Hakim has been accused of betraying the fight for equality for women. Some feminists have refused to talk to her.



Giant step: Model-maker Peter Roberts puts a final touch to a London scene at Legoland Windsor, which opens today Photograph: Philip Meech

Fire brigade liable for damage

Hampshire County Council was today facing a compensation bill of up to £1.2m after a judge held the county's fire brigade liable for the partial destruction in a blaze of a prestige company headquarters in Basingstoke.

It is believed to be only the second judgment ever obtained against a fire service in the United Kingdom for alleged negligence in the course of its work. The council is expected to appeal.

The fire broke out in the roof of the state-of-the-art headquarters of Digital Equipment Ltd, known as The Crescent, in March 1990. The owners, Capital & Counties plc, had fitted an automatic sprinkler system which, it was claimed, would have limited the damage to a small area of the roof void if it had not been turned off by the fire brigade.

The allegation was that the firefighters stopped the system while the fire was still blazing in the erroneous belief that there were no sprinklers in the roof void; that the firefighting was somehow being hampered by sprinklers at first-floor ceiling level; and that these could not be isolated and turned off without shutting down the entire system.

Judge Richard Havery QC, sitting as a High Court Official Referee, held there was no justification for the fire officer in charge to depart from the principle that sprinklers should be kept running until a fire was completely under control. He said the decision was "a bad blunder".

The judge rejected an argument by the fire brigade that it owed no legal duty to the owners of the building and, like the police, was immune from being sued as a matter of public policy.

Woman broker wins £81,000 for victimisation



Jubilant: Helen Bamber was victim of 'spite and malice'

A City broker was awarded record compensation of £81,000 yesterday after suffering eight years of sexist victimisation from her Japanese bosses.

Helen Bamber, 33, said she felt vindicated and claimed it was "a day of shame" for international investment bank Fuji. An industrial tribunal launched a scathing attack on the bank, the third largest in the world, for trying to intimidate her and ruin her reputation.

Miss Bamber, of Hampstead, north London, said she suffered continually on the grounds of her sex, being paid £43,000 a year as a Euro-bond dealer while a male colleague received £170,000. She won her claim for sexual discrimination last year but returned to the tribunal after failing to agree compensation and damages.

Tribunal chairman Ian Lamb accused the bank of showing "malevolence, spite, malice and

arrogance intended to insult and cause pain to the applicant".

Miss Bamber told the hearing Fuji still bore a grudge against her and tried to blacken her name with her new employers, a British bank in the City, by sending a letter about her case to the chief executive.

Mr Lamb said: "The conduct of the respondent in this case is off the known scale of aggravated damages... this is an exceptional case which justifies

an exceptional award." He criticised Fuji's deputy managing director, Michael Cole, who represented the bank and attacked Miss Bamber's integrity by accusing her of conspiring with her representative and boyfriend, Cameron McNeill, to extort money from the company.

"The two aspects to the counter attack were wholly unfounded and we rejected the theory," Mr Lamb said.

Miss Bamber was given £24,000 for future loss of earnings and a further £20,000 for loss of earnings at Fuji up until April 1994, when she left.

She received £12,000 for her difference in salary within the two years since she worked there, £20,000 for aggravated damages and £5,000 for injury to her feelings. With interest the final figure could top £100,000.

Miss Bamber joined Fuji International Finance as a graduate trainee in 1986 and was

consistently praised for her work and called "one of their key sales executives" after earning thousands of pounds a year. But she claimed on one occasion director Takashi Yoshida told her to resign after she spurned his sexual advances during a business trip.

Mr Cole had earlier accused Mr McNeill of cooking up the sexual allegations to "add spice" to his girlfriend's claims.

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news

Murder trial halted by judge

A murder trial was halted yesterday and the jury discharged to allow the defence to investigate new information.

Marcel Williams, 32, of Old Trafford, Manchester, was on trial at Liverpool Crown Court accused of shooting dead a man who was flyposting notices, and wounding his partner.

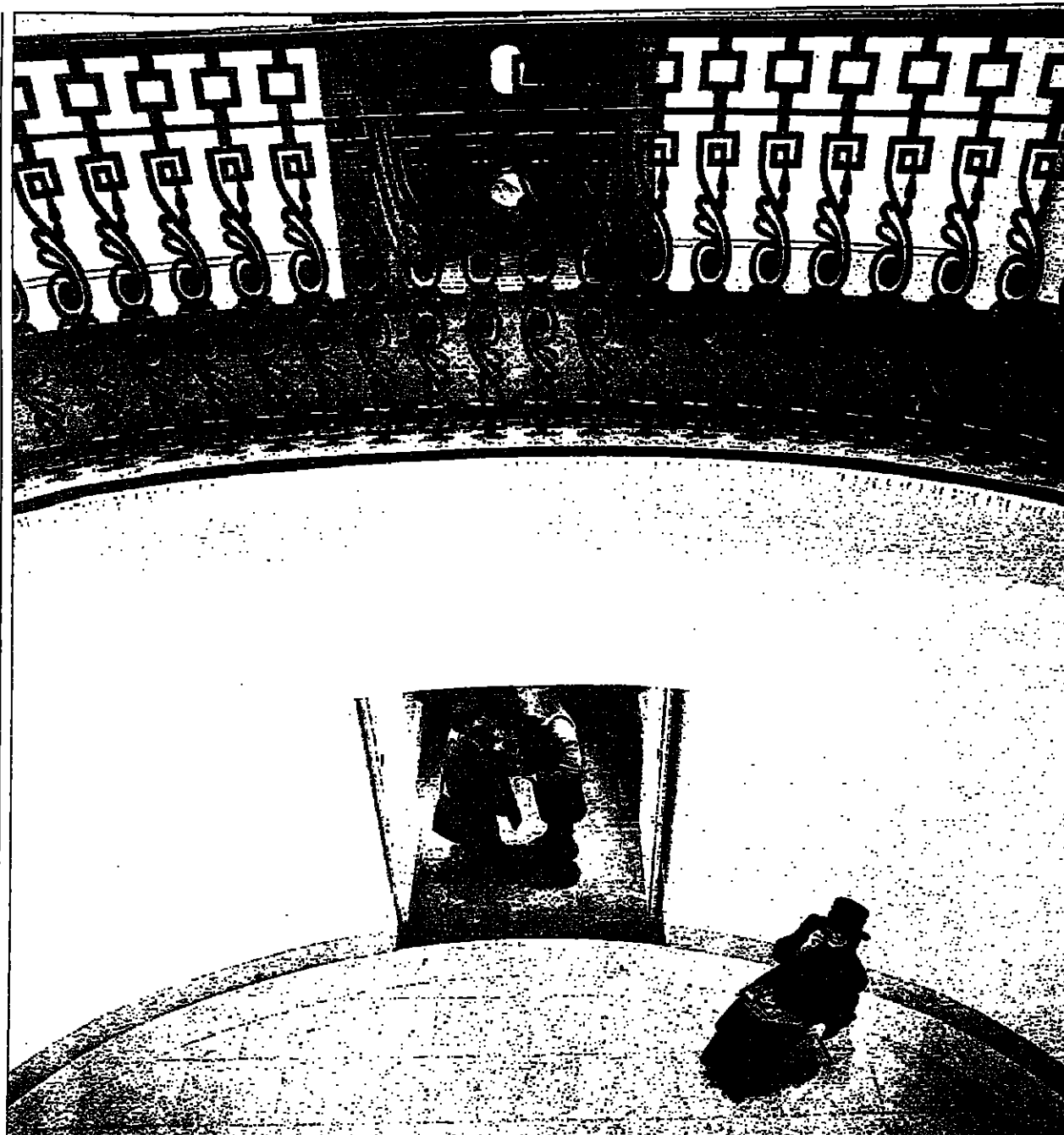
The court was told that new information had been provided to Mr Williams's QC, Michael Mansfield, and he wished to pursue it.

Mr Justice Smedley said it was impossible for the four-day trial to continue. "It is not the kind of investigation that can be done in a day, so very regrettably I am going to have to discharge you," he told the jury.

Mr Williams denies murdering Chris Horrox, 30, and attempting to murder his business partner, Jimmy Carr, 46. Mr Carr and Mr Horrox were out flyposting on the night of 2 May 1994 when Mr Carr was hit by four bullets and Mr Horrox was shot through the head.

Mr Carr has told the court that he and Mr Horrox were sticking up posters in Manchester when they were shot by Mr Williams. Mr Carr said that after being shot, he pretended to be dead. He said he was shot twice more and then heard Mr Williams shoot Mr Horrox.

Mr Williams, who claims he was "set up" and was nowhere near the scene of the shooting, was further remanded in custody until Monday.



Virgin canvas: Visitors to the new Gallery of Modern Art in Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow, for its opening ceremony yesterday. The collection is open to the public from tomorrow. Photograph: Paul Reid

Care in the community: Policy changes after double death

'Agencies failed to provide for schizophrenic'

GLENDIA COOPER

A schizophrenic who killed his mother and then committed suicide was let down by "inadequate" care in the community, an inquiry said yesterday.

Last April Robert Viner, 42, a civil engineering graduate who had lived in the community since 1982, battered his mother, Muriel, to death at her home in Corfe Mullen, Dorset, with an exercise weight and then killed himself with an overdose.

The report came the day after the inquiry into the care and treatment of the schizophrenic triple killer, Jason Mitchell, called for a shake-up in mental health laws.

While the independent inquiry found that the Viner's deaths could not have been predicted, it noted that there had been no consideration of the needs of Mrs Viner, 76, who had cared for her son for 15 years.

This was exacerbated by the "deficiencies" in communication between health, social services and housing authorities who failed to address the needs both of her and her son.

At the inquest last August, which recorded a verdict of unlawful killing on Mrs Viner, and an open verdict on her son, it was heard that Mrs Viner felt her son should move into sheltered accommodation.

Three days before the deaths a community psychiatric nurse had found Mrs Viner "at the end of her tether" with her son and Colin Giresaves, her son-in-law, also told the inquest she had been so concerned for her safety that she had hidden all the kitchen knives.

The inquiry found that Mrs Viner would have benefited from having somebody to talk to. She would not confide in her GP and one friend described her as "a prisoner of her son".

It states: "It must be a matter for concern that Muriel Viner could have cared for her son in the community for a substantial number of years and yet have had no effective contact with the social services department which would have enabled her to have access to assistance in her own right".



Robert Viner: Mother could have got more help

The inquiry said there was no clear evidence that staffing levels had an adverse effect on care, but noted that a lack of special needs housing "may have hampered the successful management" of the case.

Mr Viner was not included in the Care Programme Approach, under which the mentally ill are given a key worker. Dorset Health Commission said

it had now extended the programme so that it included all patients in contact with specialist mental health services.

The chairman of the inquiry, Anthony Harbour, said: "We recognize that the professionals involved in Robert Viner's and Muriel Viner's care worked with compassion and dedication. Nevertheless we considered this case highlights the inadequacy of the limited implementation of the care programme approach which was adopted in Dorset."

The report also found a lack of communication between agencies which "contributed to a failure to fully identify the needs of either Robert or Muriel Viner and to provide a comprehensive care plan".

The health commission said it was implementing an action plan to ensure the 36 recommendations made by the inquiry were swiftly implemented and £750,000 had been set aside to develop support for carers in Dorset and a Carers' Charter had been introduced.

More community psychiatric nurses and seven new social worker posts have been created to support the work of mental health teams with regular monitoring of those under the care programme approach.

The chief executive of the commission, Ian Carruthers, said: "The deaths of Robert and Muriel Viner were a regrettable tragedy... Important changes in service provision have already been made in the light of an internal inquiry into the deaths. In addition the agencies involved... have signed up to an action plan to ensure the inquiry team's recommendations are carried forward."

Families 'need more say'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The balance between the rights of the mentally ill and those of their families needs to tip back in favour of the families, Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of the mental health charity Sane, said yesterday in the wake of the Jason Mitchell and Robert Viner reports.

At the same time, she warned, the Government's recently announced package to improve help for the mentally ill remained completely inadequate.

Both the Mitchell and Viner cases - in which one killed his father and the other his mother - showed that relatives were not listened to and failed to get the support they needed, she said.

"The professionals, as usual, took the view that they would wait until something worse happened," she said.

The problem, she said, was that psychiatrists, nurses and social workers all acted as advocates for the patient, "but there is no one to act as advocate for the families."

"There are people working for the rights and fulfilment of the person who is mentally ill, but not for the rights of families, and particularly of elderly parents. And there is a conflict of interest between the two."

"There obviously has to be a balance struck, but the pendulum has to swing back. There is too little attention paid to the needs of relatives and carers."

In neither of the recent cases, she said, would the package

of new measures announced by Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, help.

It involved a £95m programme, far from all of which was new money, which included new 24-hour nursed homes to provide asylum for the most disturbed schizophrenics and others who need the "long stay" care which used to be provided in hospital. But divided up between health authorities, she said, that amounted to around £500,000 each - barely enough to run just one of the 20-bed units each, even if the capital to build them was found.

"What are they meant to do with all the rest of the people who don't qualify for these few facilities?" she asked. "These measures simply do not match the scale of the problem."

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Minister quits over baptism

A Methodist minister yesterday announced he had resigned because of an "amicable" disagreement with his church over the issue of baptism.

The Rev Terry Pottle, based at Amble, Northumberland, said he no longer wished to perform the ceremony - which placed him in direct contravention of church policy.

"The position is very simple: the Methodist Church maintains a position of baptising babies as a sign of God's love and offer of grace to all people," said Mr Pottle, who serves six churches and is also Methodist chaplain to Acklington Prison.

"From my point of view this was not the practice of the early church, neither is it taught in the Bible. The Methodist Church requires ministers to baptise infants where appropriate. I feel that I can no longer, in good conscience, do this and have therefore tendered my resignation, which has been accepted by the President of the Methodist Conference."

"Obviously, I am very sad to be going but as a minister I feel

I have to maintain my own integrity if I am to preach the Bible to other people. But it is an amicable parting under the circumstances." Mr Pottle, 45, and his wife, Marie, are due to leave their home in August after four years of service.

Mr Pottle said that if anyone approached him asking for a baptism he referred them to another minister who would do it, which meant the church was not turning anyone away.

He said he wished to continue as a minister and was now considering approaching other Christian denominations which did not carry out baptisms.

The Rev Dr Stephen Mosedale, the Methodist Coordinating Secretary of Church Life, based in London, said: "We do have a clear policy about what we expect of our ministers as regards infant baptism: it is that they are required to be willing to baptise them in appropriate circumstances."

"Therefore, it is inevitable a minister who no longer feels willing to undertake baby baptism will have to resign."

Electronic road tolls run into traffic

JAMES CUSICK

Plans for the introduction of electronic road tolls on Britain's motorways, regarded as crucial to the Government's future transport strategy, are facing further serious delay after the withdrawal of half the private-sector companies involved in developing the toll technology.

Charges for using the 2,000-mile motorway network were

being planned for introduction in 1998 with the Government banking on receiving £700m from the toll charges. Electronic tolling would also have provided the key to charging motorists on new roads financed by the private sector.

A year ago the Department of Transport was trumpeting Britain's potential world lead in electronic toll technology. Trials were scheduled to begin this

summer on the M3 with eight leading firms involved in designing a national toll system. However the timetable slipped back 18 months. Now, with the withdrawal of the three firms, there is even more delay.

Although the DoT said the withdrawals were for "commercial" reasons, the project has allegedly been dogged by disillusionment over government pricing policy arguments.

Siemens, one of the companies who pulled out, would not comment on the decision yesterday.

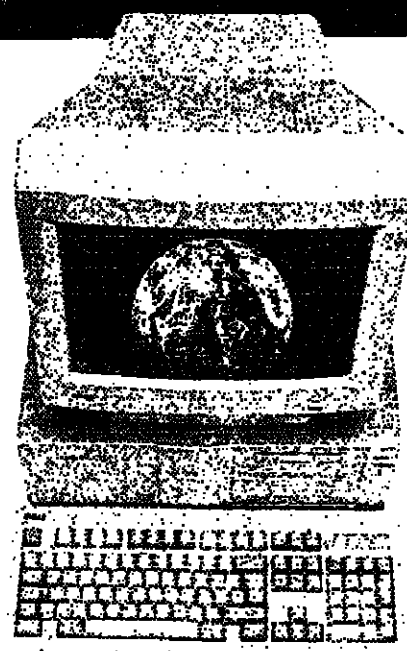
The DoT confirmed yesterday that it "would be unlikely for the motorway trials to commence this year". A report in today's *Economist* suggested the entire project was on the verge of collapse.

The continuing delays have put the idea of selling toll charges to the public, "per-

viously close to the coming general election", according to Whitehall sources. There has been growing concern in some government circles that descriptions of the electronic road charges as a potential "poll tax on wheels" were justified. One study, compiled by the Centre for Policy Studies, concluded that there was "a real risk of civil disobedience" if any system was not completely accurate.

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Managing Director of Burger King Europe, Craig Bushey, made this announcement:

"As we have stated previously, all Burger King patties are made from beef of the highest quality, taken from prime cuts of forequarter and flank that contain no offal or mechanically recovered meat. In accordance with the latest government statement, we are confident that this beef is safe to consume.

However, our customers' lack of confidence in British beef, the related potential damage to our business and threat to our employees' livelihood has caused us to take the decision to source beef outside the UK until confidence in British beef is fully restored."

From Saturday 30th March, and until further notice, all beefburgers served in Burger King restaurants will be made with non-British beef.

You will still be able to enjoy the BK Chicken Flamer™, Chicken Royale, Spicy Beanburger and all other items on our menu. Naturally, should circumstances change in any way, we will keep you informed through the press and our restaurants.

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news



Grand concepts: Rob Lee yesterday working on his sculpture of William Blake's God, destined to join Atlas, Medusa and three other figures at the Natural History Museum's new Earth Galleries which open in South Kensington, London, in July

Photograph: José McVeste

Churchill papers purchase was 'vital'

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Lord Rothschild, chairman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, yesterday defended himself against charges of squandering lottery money on the £13m purchase of the Churchill archive.

The decision last May to buy the papers from the war leader's family, including the Tory MP Winston Churchill, was one of the first grants by the NHMF, which distributes lottery money for heritage projects.

Lord Rothschild came under attack from some members of the Heritage Select Committee.

Joe Ashton, Labour MP for Bassetlaw, said that there had been some doubt whether Winston Churchill, Sir Winston's grandson, was the legal owner of the archive.

"Surely people who spent money on lottery tickets would not have wanted their money to end up in the pockets of Churchill's grandson?" he asked.

"There are things in national life which are somehow sacred icons in this country. We helped save the first letters Nelson wrote with his left hand and Wellington's dispatch from the Battle of Waterloo," Lord Rothschild replied.

The select committee dis-

agreed about the value of the purchase. John Maxton, Labour MP for Cathcart, told Lord Rothschild: "You were right to spend that money on acquiring the Churchill papers, but you never should have had to. It was a disgrace that any member of the family should have demanded money for the papers."

Call for agency to stop medical research fraud

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

A UK agency to police allegations of scientific fraud and protect whistle-blowers who inform on colleagues was called for yesterday by Britain's top two medical journals.

In a unique collaboration, the *Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal* produced separate leading articles demanding action as a new book detailed more than 70 proven or suspected cases of scientific dishonesty and fraud worldwide.

"Britain's medical profession harbours a culture that prefers to sweep such problems under the carpet," Dr Richard Smith, the *BMJ*'s editor said, while Dr Richard Horton, the editor of the *Lancet*, declared that "professional self-regulation has failed".

If Britain's medical and scientific community - the Royal Colleges, the General Medical Council, the Royal Society, the research councils and other bodies who fund research - do not act this time, the government will have to, Dr Smith warned. But an attempt last year

to set up such a body floundered when representatives of the Royal Society, the Medical Research Council and the General Medical Council were "scornful" of the proposal, Dr Smith said.

The call has been given topical urgency by the General Medical Council's decision last week to strike off Dr Geoffrey Fairhurst, a Merseyside GP who was vice-chairman of a medical ethics committee and a former government adviser, who forged patient's consent forms for drug company-sponsored trials which earned him at least £15,000.

It also follows the case last year of Malcolm Pearce, the consultant obstetrician at St George's Hospital, south-west London, who was struck off after falsely claiming to have relocated an ectopic pregnancy - one that begins in the fallopian tube, which transports eggs to the womb - into the womb, producing a successful birth. He also published false claims about a trial involving 191 women in a journal which he edited.

Fraud in medical research is now "pervasive", the *Lancet* said. But the response to scientific misconduct in the UK and many other countries "has been one of casual indifference".

An agency to investigate fraud, review complaints and establish the true prevalence of the problem is "urgently needed", it added.

The article went on to ask: "How many more patients will have to be mistreated and how much more dishonest research will have to be conducted and published before our complacency finally damages the reputation of the medical research community beyond repair?"

The United States, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Austria and Australia all now have "coherent systems" for tackling

the problem, Dr Smith said. The US system is a Commission of Research Integrity, set up by Congress and the Department of Health because of the scientific community's inability to deal adequately with misconduct.

Allegations must be fully investigated, with both whistle-blowers and those they accuse treated with "respect, fairness and openness".

A commission could both provide guidelines for institutions and individuals, offer impartial investigation, collect data and sponsor research. Although accurate data are lacking, the *Lancet* said, fraud seems to affect between 1 in 1000 and 4 in 1000 research studies.

Personal ambition, greed, the need to publish to gain recognition and promotion, and league tables of university performance where research income and output is divided by the number of staff all contribute to fraud.

Such frauds can range from the criminally invented, non-existent, study, to minor and sometimes unwitting plagiarism, to simple carelessness, to publishing the same results in different journals and being given authorship of papers to which the researcher has contributed little or nothing. John Howie, Professor of General Practice at Edinburgh University, says in an introduction to his book, *Fraud and Misconduct in Medical Research - the work which has prompted the articles in the medical journals*.

The lack of a career structure for research staff may also contribute, where those in mid-career become expensive to fund but need to continue to appear innovative.

"The temptations are obvious," Prof Howie said. The "fundamental" change needed is to shift the research climate firmly back "from quantity towards quality".

From Piltown Man to fake drug trials

Scientific fraud dates at least as far back as Piltown Man who was "discovered" in 1932 and to the changes in the 1970s that "Cybint" reversed data for his seminal study on twins and intelligence. Cases in the past two decades include:

■ William Sumner, an immunologist at the Sloan-Kettering Institute in New York, who in 1974 faked transplant results in white mice by using a black pen to produce darkened skin patches. If true, the finding would have had huge implications for organ transplantation and immunology.

■ William McBride, an Australian scientist famous for helping expose the thalidomide scandal, who in 1988 was found to have forged data on the action of fetal rubens of "moxine", a drug used as a pre-med and anti-emetic before operations. His data appeared to raise a major threat to the drug Debondor.

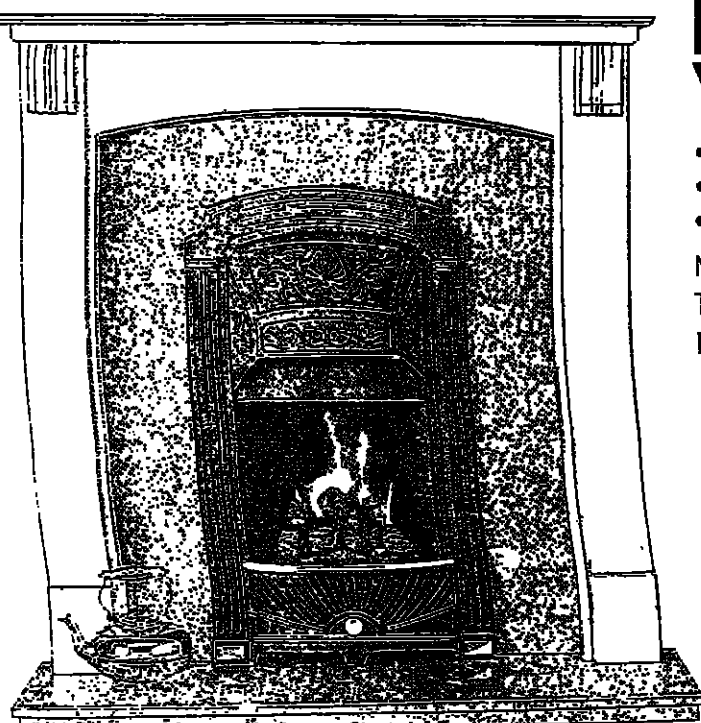
■ Mark Specter, a 24-year-old Cornell University graduate student was found in 1981 to have faked data on a viral cause of cancer that colleagues predicted would win him the Nobel Prize.

■ Since 1975, 26 cases involving 35 doctors - all but two GPs - have been reported to the GMC for faking data in drug-company sponsored trials. Doctors have made up data, faked patients' dates of birth, forged consent signatures, and forged signatures of other participating doctors.

Fraud and Misconduct in Medical Research, Stephen Lock and Frank Wells, BMJ Publishing Group, £29.95

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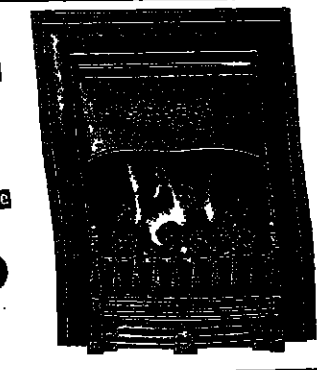
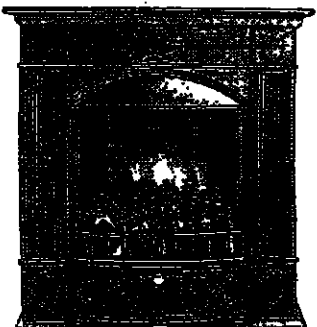
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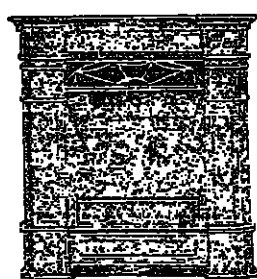
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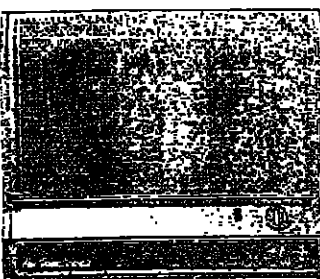
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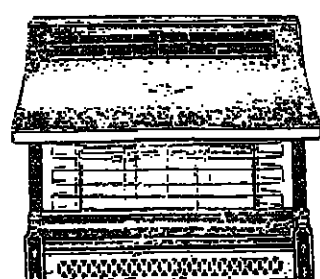
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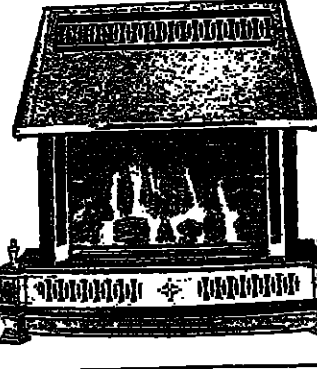
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Otters' designer homes mark happy ending to riverbank tale



Open house: One of the riverside apartments built to entice otters back to the River Kennet. Photographs: John Voos

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Designer riverside apartments are being built for otters to entice the animals back to the Thames region after pollution forced them to flee in the 1950s.

The National Rivers Authority together with wildlife conservation groups in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire, are working with the local water authority to re-establish the otters.

"Otters vanished from the area in the late-1950s and 1960s because of excessive river pollution," said a spokesman for Thames Water. "We don't want to artificially re-introduce otters into the area, so we are building homes for them to find."

Each new otter bolt consists of an underground chamber measuring two metres square with access, via pipes, to the river and nearby land. The chambers are divided into "rooms" with concrete slabs.

The locations of the hots are being kept secret to protect the otters' privacy, but all are along the river Kennet in Wiltshire. The initiative follows a similar scheme along the upper Thames last year.



Heavenly creatures: Otters were forced away from rivers by pollution in the 1950s

The sites were selected by Mark Sattin, the Kennet Otter Habitat Project Officer with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. "Otters were once found throughout England," he said, "but pollution and habitat loss have caused their numbers to decline rapidly. These new apartments are ideal ... as [ot-

ters] are secretive creatures and like dark, quiet places near water." Otters were recently seen in the area for the first time in 20 years. John Lawrence, Thames Water's waste manager, said: "We want to do all we can to make life easier for the otters now they are returning to the region's rivers." Thames Wa-

ter has invested £550m in improving sewage works in the region and plans to spend another £300m by the turn of the century. "Our investment at sewage treatment works has paved the way for their return ... We hope that new riverside pads will make them feel even more welcome."

Police study guide to catch serial offenders

JASON BENNETT
Crime Correspondent

A guide to catching serial killers, multiple rapists, kidnapers and armed robbers, is to be issued to senior detectives for the first time. The confidential manual also supports the use of offender profiling in major investigations and gives a list of recommended psychologists who can be used in trying to track down serial offenders.

Police officers believe that new investigative techniques and modern technology such as DNA sampling will reveal that there are many more serial murderers and rapists than previously thought. They also predict that many major crimes, previously believed to have been one-offs, are linked.

The handbook is being drawn up by the Association of Chief Police Officers following a number of serial crimes, including the murders carried out by Frederick and Rosemary West, and the case of Michael Sams, who was jailed for life in 1993 for the murder of Julie Dart and the kidnapping of the estate agent Stephanie Slater. The police believe important lessons have been learnt from these types of linked cases. They also want to draw together all the forensic and technological advances of the past decade.

Until this publication the police had not produced their own guide to catching major criminals. In 1963, following the conviction of the Yorkshire Ripper, Peter Sutcliffe, the Home Office produced a cir-

cular called *The Investigation of a Series of Major Crimes*, but that it now considered out of date and inadequate.

Among the subjects covered in the book are the latest interview techniques, the use of computerised incident rooms, how to manage a major investigation, training, how the media can help in investigations, and what help detectives can get from the newly-established Crime Faculty.

The book, which will only be available to senior investigating officers, says offender profiling – the technique of predicting the likely characteristics of an offender – can be a useful tool in major investigations. There have been remarkable successes using such techniques. John Duffy, the so-called Railway Murderer who was convicted of rapes and murders near railway lines in London in 1986, was caught as a direct result of a profile compiled by Professor David Canter.

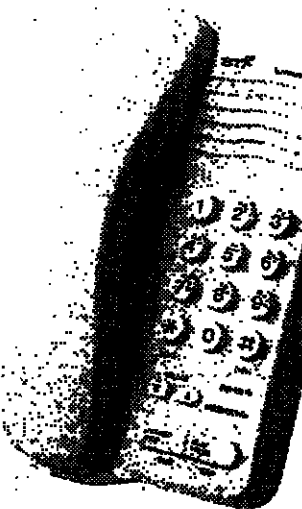
The manual follows a year-long inquiry by a working party of Acpo's crime committee, headed by Detective Chief Superintendent Michael Jenkins, of the West Midlands police.

Inspector Clive Parsons, the group's secretary, said: "You have got to expect that we are going to find more links between serious crimes in the future. We are trying to get officers not to treat major crimes as one-offs – we want people to consider links with other incidents. The police now acknowledge that they should be looking for over-all patterns of crime."

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Royal triumph: Portillo sets up independent trust to preserve seafaring links and architectural and historic integrity of Wren's masterpiece on Thames

University wins bid for naval college site

Plans backed personally by the Prince of Wales were accepted last night as the winning bid to turn the historic Royal Naval College, Greenwich, into Britain's foremost Baroque site. Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, also announced that an independent trust would be set up to preserve the architectural and historic integrity of the famous site.

There was a nationwide outcry when plans were unveiled to close the naval college which is housed in the twin-domed palace and lease out the buildings. But Mr Portillo delighted conservationists by announcing that the University of Greenwich was the most appropriate contender to be the main occupant, with the National Maritime Museum using certain sections.

Some of the buildings will be converted to provide sheltered accommodation for retired seafarers and their wives or widows.

Dr David Fussey, Vice-Chancellor of Greenwich University, welcomed the announcement. "I am absolutely delighted that the university has been identified as the most appropriate, main occupant of the Royal Naval College site," he said, adding that the maintenance and preservation of the architectural and historical integrity of the site "remains a top priority".

Dr Fussey stressed there would be improved public access to allow both local people and visitors to enjoy part of the nation's great heritage. The university will work alongside the Government in an attempt to secure World Heritage status for Greenwich and transform it into a British Versailles.

Detailed negotiations will now begin to refine the plans to occupy the college site.

Mr Portillo said the independent trust would pay particular attention to the college's historical associations with the Royal Navy, with a senior retired admiral likely to be one of the trustees. He acknowledged the announcement would be a disappointment to the seven other bidders for the 150-year lease.

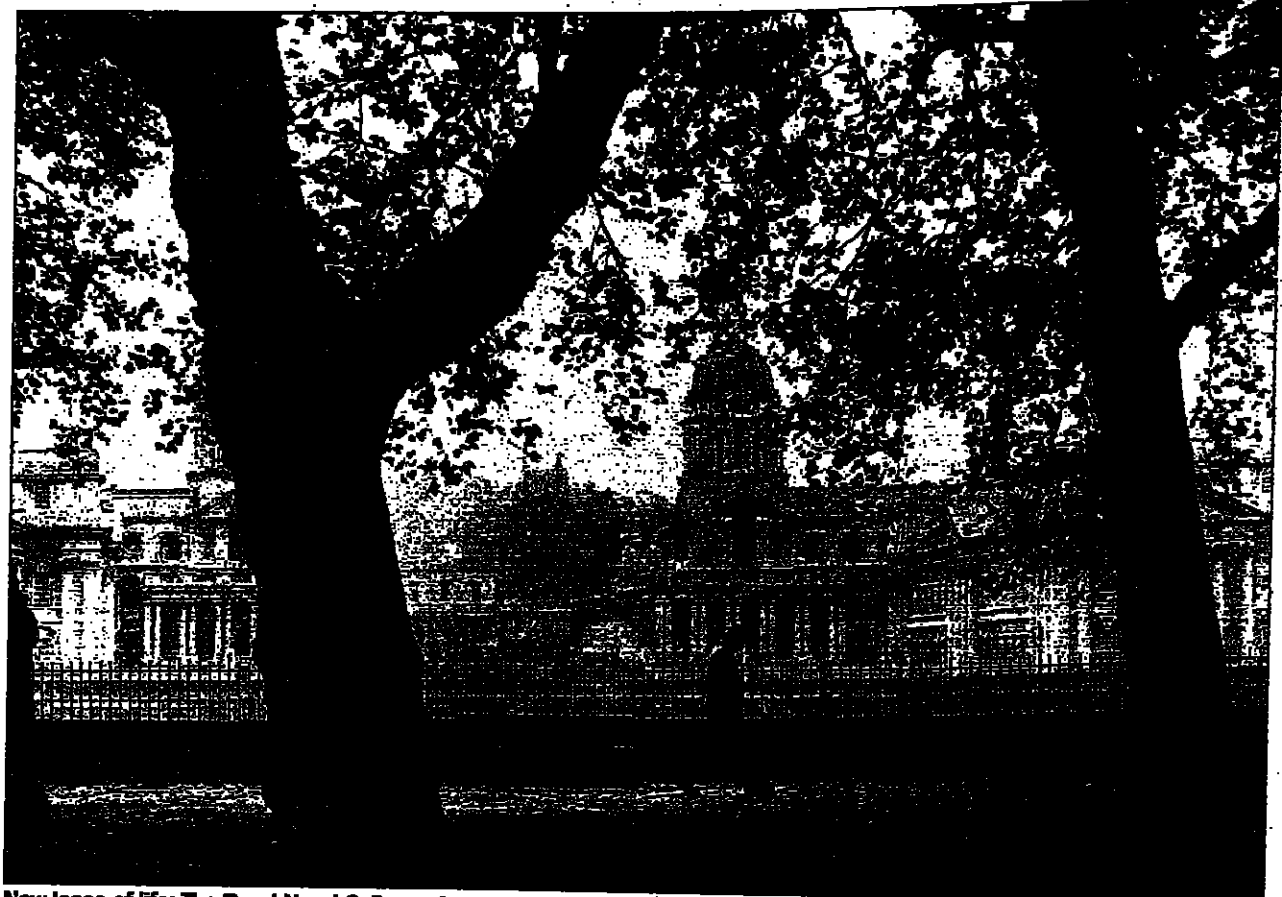
But he said: "The Government is determined that the future use of the Royal Naval College should be one worthy of the magnificent site and in the best interests of Greenwich Hospital and the nation."

Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, said the announcement confirms the Government's commitment to adopt the most effective means for ensuring the future conservation and use of "these exceptional buildings".

Concerns over the future of Greenwich prompted the Prince of Wales to call a meeting with senior ministers and heritage experts in the riverside buildings last November. A spokesman for the prince said he would be "pleased to hear this great news".

It is expected that the maritime museum will use the famed Painted Hall and Chapel, while the university will occupy the other areas for teaching, research and administration.

More than 800 organisations originally expressed an interest in Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece on the Thames. But the size of the building and the strict requirements that ruled out its use for the likes of an hotel put many potential bidders off.



New lease of life: The Royal Naval College whose occupants will include students and retired seafarers. Photograph: Brian Harris

Forces sign up to anti-racism action plan

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

Military personnel found guilty of racial discrimination will now face court martial under a plan to stamp out continuing discrimination in the armed forces.

Although the Ministry of Defence yesterday denied allegations of "widespread" racism in the Army, it signed up to an action plan recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality following a report released yesterday which detailed individual cases of discrimination.

Under the new penalties, courts martial will be considered regardless of whether any other offence has been committed under military law.

Herman Ouseley, chairman of the CRE, said that the agreement with the MoD to try to achieve racial equality should have been concluded "a decade ago". The action plan, signed by Mr Ouseley and the Permanent Under-Secretary at the MoD, Richard Mottram, lays down a strict timetable for the implementation of reforms, including written instructions to all key personnel reminding them of their obligations under the Equal Opportunities Directive; thorough monitoring of the ethnic origins of applicants; a review of the Army's selection tests for soldiers; and special measures to increase recruitment of "visible ethnic minorities" into the Household Cavalry, which now has none.

The 60-page report, focusing on the 1,000-strong Household Cavalry Regiment — formerly the Life Guards and the Blues and Royals — was launched in January 1995. It followed a case where a black soldier who was discouraged from transferring to the Life Guards in 1991 successfully won compensation from the Army. Mr Ouseley said that all the action taken by the Army to achieve racial equality in the past year had been triggered by this formal investigation.

The report found that the MoD had recently introduced an ethnic-monitoring system but had "no usable data". Bob Purkiss, who headed the study, said he had found "serious inadequacies in the ethnic-mon-

Soldier 'felt an outcast'

The report highlighted the case of 'Soldier A', who joined the Army in 1984. He had one black and one white parent. He recalled that one officer at the selection centre had been concerned at his joining the Household Cavalry and attending the Guards training centre at Pirbright, Surrey. There he encountered 'a barrage of racism'. On the evening of the first day he and another coloured recruit were visited by an instructor who warned them 'you two are going to get problems'. He nicknamed them 'Mustafa Crap' and 'Mustafa Shit'. Numerous incidents followed, sometimes in front of hundreds of other soldiers. The presence of the other ethnic minority recruit helped 'Soldier A', but he left and 'Soldier A' said he then felt a 'complete outcast'. At no time did he ever make an official complaint.

ing officer, of 'Anglo-Indian' origin, could possibly be considered part of the latter. The regiment also had a reputation for not wanting ethnic minority soldiers, which led to direct discrimination against one soldier posted to the Household Cavalry and against one serving in it.

However, Mr Mottram said "we do not accept, and neither does the report suggest, that there is widespread discrimination in the Army as a whole".

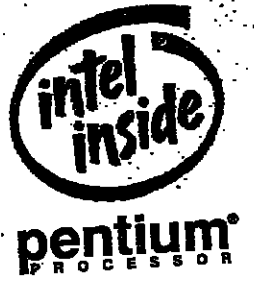
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DAILY POEM

Finn's People
By Mairi MacInnes

landed and waited for him
till the moors darkened
and seas grew thick.
After centuries, absently
and thinking all the while of Finn,
they took off their old grey heads
and threw them to cap a nearby hill
so high and deeply nothing could take root.

They trooped then, headless,
down the path to an unroofed place
settled their feet in the turf
side by side in a ring
and addressed themselves to the future.
By the time Finn came
they'd have turned to stone.
He must have grieved, unpunctual Finn,
to find a set of slabs
that once would have got up to bow
and a cairn of heads
no longer able to weep.

Mairi MacInnes recently resumed a writing career which began in the Fifties. Her latest collection *Elsewhere & Back* (Bloodaxe, 1993), and a second novel, *The Quondam Wives* (Louisiana U.P.), lie this side of a divide in which she brought up a family and worked in the States. *The New Yorker* recently published her account of a lifetime which has been devoted to children and poetry in equal measure.

Adoption law shake-up vows to end race bar

GLENDIA COOPER

Prospective parents should no longer be victims of "political correctness" and barred from adoption on grounds of education, race or age, the Government announced yesterday.

In the biggest shake-up in adoption law for 20 years, ministers said they want more parents to consider adoption, along with the options of keeping the baby, or abortion.

Critics claimed this could result in "social engineering" if pressure was brought to bear on single mothers to give their children up for adoption.

Adoptions have fallen by more than half over the last 30 years. In 1977, a year after the Adoption Act, almost 13,000 children were adopted; about 3,000 were babies under a year old. In 1991 the total was 7,000 and fewer than 900 were babies.

The new bill stresses the need to protect the child's welfare. It includes a welfare checklist for agencies and the courts, a new complaints procedure and the right of adopted children to obtain information about their

background when they reach 18. Step- and foster-parents will also find it easier to adopt - 50 per cent of adoptions are now by step-parents.

Councils will have a new duty to publicise their range of adoption services and encourage more families to consider adoption, particularly families from ethnic communities.

The Health Minister, John Bawls, said: "I want to see a system which safeguards children without the tangle of red tape and the roadblock of political correctness. There is no room for ruling out adoptive parents on such grounds of education, age or race."

Cases that caught national attention include Jim and Rosa Lawrence, from Cromer, Norfolk who were told they could not adopt a mixed-race child because of their "lack of understanding of racial issues". Mrs Lawrence was born to an Asian family in Guyana.

Hammersmith and Fulham refused one couple the right to adopt a Chinese child because they would be unable to ensure links with "China's rich culture".

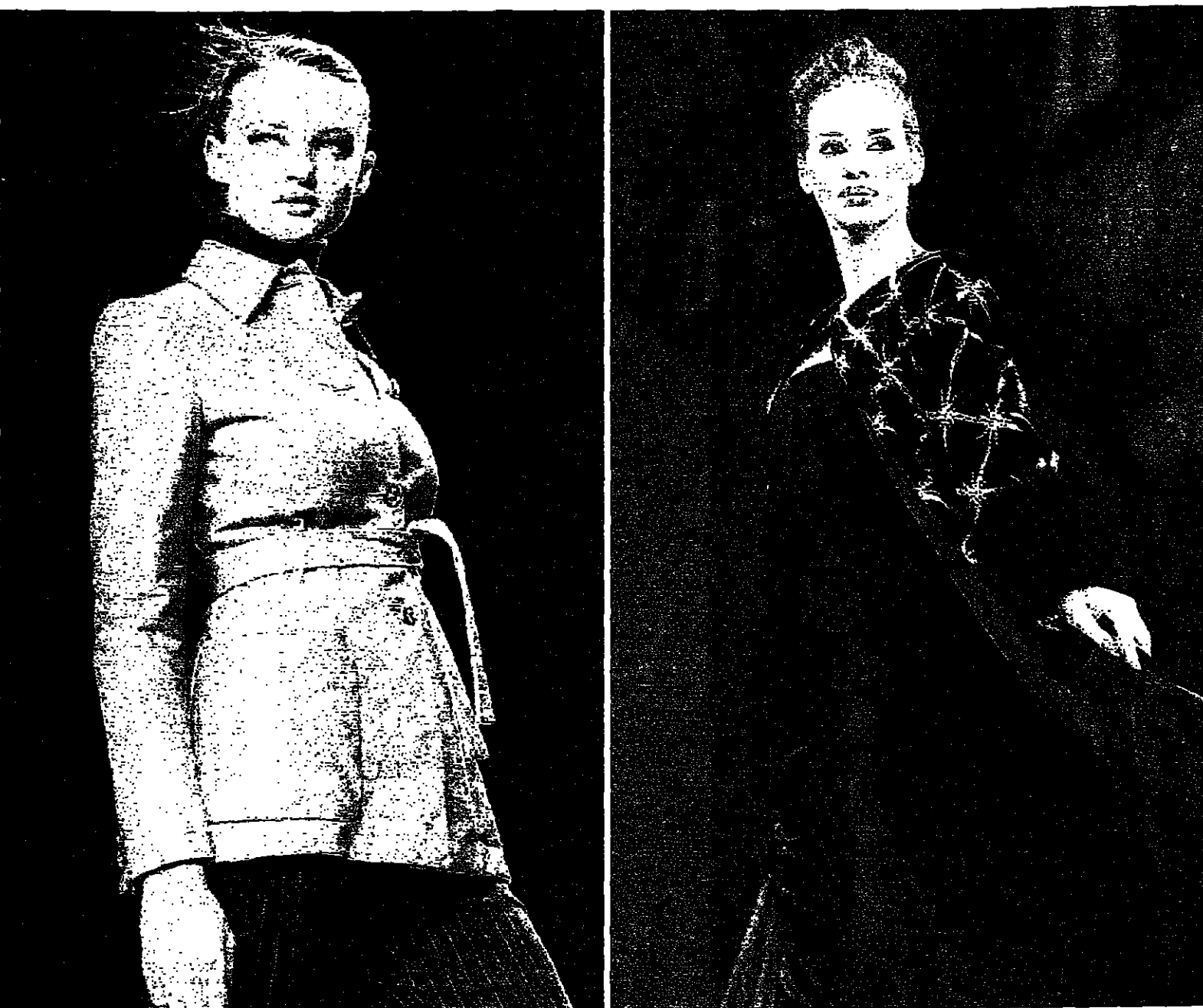
"Eighteen months ago, an adoption agency run by Kent social services said couples who had unprotected sex, smoked, were over the age of 37, or overweight, would be considered only for older children and those with special needs."

Felicity Collier, director of the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, said: "The picture of adoption workers withholding children from desperate families is cruel and misleading."

Mr Bawls insisted the best place for a child was with its natural parents and there was no intention to put pressure on single mothers. But Brian Waller, chairman of the ADSS Children and Families committee, said: "It feels like social engineering, which is not what adoption should be about."

"It's counter-productive to try to pressure parents. If they do give up their baby, it can stay with them for the rest of their lives. There are very unhappy adults with serious mental health problems because of the pressure they were put under 20, 30 years ago."

New York fashion: Donna Karan show takes it to the maxi



NY style: A yellow leather coat over brown pinstripes (left) from DKNY, whose autumn collection took in the season's styles of military detailing and maxi coats, and (right) a silk velvet-beaded coat with brown fox fur cuffs from Donald Deal. Photographs: Mark Cardwell / Joe Tabacca

Rugby prop denies blame

A young rugby player alleged to have collapsed the scrum which resulted in the paralysis of an opponent yesterday denied any responsibility for his injury.

Ben Smolton, 21, is claiming £1m damages for the 1991 accident during a game between Sutton Coldfield and Burton on Trent under-19 Colts, which left him confined to a wheelchair.

Mr Smolton, of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, a hooker, claims the referee, Michael Nolan, and Burton's tight head prop, Thomas Whitworth, were to blame. He alleges that Mr Nolan did not take proper control of the match, and that Mr Whitworth was aggressive and contributed to the collapse of the scrums by taking the players' shoulders below hip height. He

believes his injury was caused by Mr Whitworth moving out of position.

Mr Whitworth, 22, of Lower Leigh, Staffordshire, told Mr Justice Curtis that Mr Smolton came into the scrums with a "forceful" attitude.

He said that Mr Nolan offered advice during the match on how to maintain a stable scrum: "He told us 'Be careful. Use common sense. Crouch, touch, pause, engage. Use due care while engaging. Keep the scrums high.'"

He said he was told that Mr Smolton was hooking the ball in the scrum with his left hand rather than his feet. Because of that, he held Mr Smolton's hand during a few scrums, but did not do so in the one in which

he was injured. All he could remember of that scrum - which collapsed almost at once - was himself, the rest of his front row and Mr Smolton on the floor.

Immediately before its collapse he maintained his normal scrum position. He dismissed as "untrue" suggestions put by his counsel, Christopher Symons QC, that he had deliberately collapsed or lowered the scrum, head-butted or punched an opponent or dropped his left shoulder and "boled in" towards Mr Smolton.

Mr Symons: "During this collapse, or immediately after, or after the match and in the weeks that followed, did anyone point a finger of blame at you?" Mr Whitworth: "No sir."

The hearing continues today.

Top presenters go as Talk Radio flounders

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Talk Radio UK plunged into further turmoil yesterday after revelations that its political presenter, Trevor McDonald, has decided to quit and Simon Bates, the former Radio 1 disc jockey, had been axed.

Jonathan King, who hosted the mid-morning show, has also been told that his contract at the

national radio station will not be renewed as it struggles to contain losses of up to £1m a month.

The decision to sack Mr Bates - who was hired at a salary of £120,000 a year - followed a 10 per cent drop in audience figures to just over 300,000 for his breakfast show which began last October. Surprisingly perhaps, research showed that listeners did not like his most

famous contribution, Our Tune, which had won a lucrative sponsorship deal with Kleenex.

"It was just not popular. People who listened to Bates did not want to know. Audience figures fell by 8 per cent when it came on," a Talk Radio insider said. The DJ is now consulting his lawyers.

Trevor McDonald, who anchors *News at Ten*, only managed to pull in 100,000 listeners

for his flagship Sunday morning political show.

The axing of the big-name presenters represents yet another U-turn for the national commercial station, which hired them last year after its launch concept of "shock-jock" radio proved a flop.

Now struggling to maintain audiences of under 2 million - compared to 4.6 million for Classic FM and 4.2 million for

Virgin Radio, its only two national rivals - it is now on to its third attempt at a fresh start under the management of Travis Baxter, managing director of CLT, which runs the station. Jason Bryant, the third programme director of the station since it began in February last year, said: "I want to put a line-up of presenters together which appeals to the public. It sounds easy to do, but it isn't."

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Railtrack warned over Forth Bridge repairs

Safety survey: Checks reveal 'significant deterioration'

Rail chiefs were yesterday ordered to improve maintenance of the 100-year-old Forth Bridge, near Edinburgh.

The Health and Safety Executive said the mile-long bridge - which carries 1,000 trains a week over the river Forth - was still safe, but Railtrack needed to repair existing damage and step up maintenance procedures.

The assessment by the HSE was prompted by public concern about the condition of the bridge which has recently been shedding large flakes of red paint.

The report said: "The bridge is over 100 years old and some deterioration in its condition is to be expected. However, the assessment has indicated that over many years the maintenance system has not been robust enough to prevent significant deterioration in certain areas of the bridge."

Engineers from HM Railway Inspectorate carried out a survey of the condition of the bridge - a hazard analysis and structural study. In their judgement the bridge was safe in its current condition to carry Railtrack's present loading.

Although the bridge has been allowed to deteriorate, its structural integrity was not compromised. Its carrying capacity in its present condition complied with modern standards of safe design for bridges. The existing maintenance regime

needed improvement if deterioration was to be stopped and potential structural problems in the future were to be avoided, the study said.

Sam Robertson, chief inspecting officer of railways, said he was not alarmed by the survey, but added: "We were dissatisfied, disappointed, concerned to find that parts of the bridge had been allowed to deteriorate with no apparent maintenance over long periods and this was confirmed because of a complete lack of records."

He explained that when Railtrack took responsibility for the bridge two years ago they found big gaps in maintenance records.

"Clearly it indicates a lack of care on the part of people responsible at the time."

Railtrack now has to meet several requirements including completing an overall survey of the bridge's condition, and establishing a full understanding of how the bridge and in particular its bearings - which allow contraction and expansion - were designed to work.

It will also have to complete a structural assessment of the bridge and prepare an action plan for restoration and repairs. Railtrack will also have to prepare a maintenance plan to cover the future upkeep and monitoring of the bridge's condition.

Mr Robertson said that the HSE had given Railtrack formal

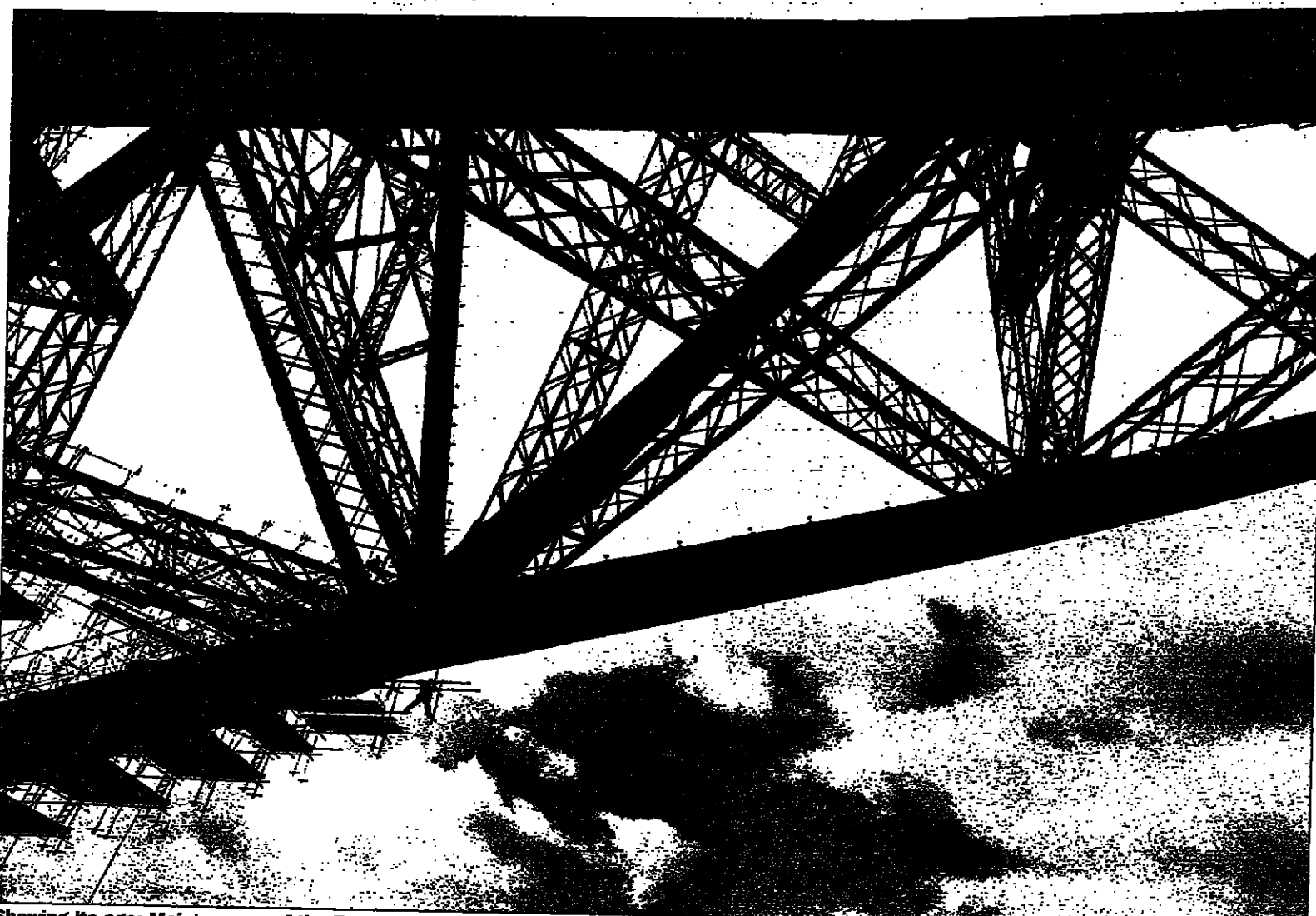
notice of its intention to issue improvement notices in respect of these items.

The report said some secondary sections, steel angle straps, were so rusted they were broken through and had to be replaced. Some parts of the bridge had no paint or coating other than the oil treatment applied when it was built. "A significant backlog of painting work needs to be addressed. Between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of the bridge required some sort of coating."

The survey showed the paint applied over the last 100 years was no longer providing adequate protection to the steel underneath. "In recent years, grit-blasting had been used to remove old paint, but this had also removed the original oil and coating from the steel which gave a degree of protection."

Railtrack said it would be spending more than £3m on the bridge in the next financial year. A spokesman said: "We too have carried out an in-depth analysis on the carrying capacity and condition of the bridge and we are preparing a maintenance plan which will preserve the bridge indefinitely."

The statement added: "Railtrack welcomes the Health and Safety Executive's report and its acknowledgment that the Forth Bridge is safe, its integrity is not compromised and that it complies with modern standards of safe design."



Showing its age: Maintenance of the Forth Bridge needs to be stepped up if structural problems are to be avoided Photograph: Colin McPherson

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Cash crisis may force cutbacks at Amnesty

PAUL FIELD

Amnesty International in the UK may be forced to scale down or even cancel important campaigns on human rights violations around the world because of a financial crisis.

The UK section of the international movement suffered a drop in income last year and now needs to raise £600,000 within a month to fund campaigns on China, torture and the death penalty. Management has already drawn up contingency plans which will involve slashing budgets if the money is not found.

In an effort to bolster funds, Amnesty's treasurer, Martin Lubieniecki, has written to the

organisation's 127,000 members in the UK: "If we don't raise this money in time, then Amnesty will be forced to take a back seat on many critical campaigns in 1996. We've never had to do that before. The fact is that if Amnesty is not there to stand up and shout for human rights wherever they are being abused in the world, no one will be."

David Bull, director of the UK section, said: "I have been with the organisation for five and a half years and we have never been in this position in that time." Although plans had been drawn up in case the shortfall on its proposed budget of £7.7m was not made up, he said he was "confident the membership would respond".

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£5,000 +	3.59	3.75	2.77
£10,000 +	4.51	4.80	3.38
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£220,000 award for victim of police assault

A hairdresser was yesterday awarded £220,000 damages after a jury decided that he was assaulted by police and wrongly arrested.

Kenneth Shu, 32, claimed he was attacked by police when he refused to let them into his London home without a warrant in July 1992.

The Metropolitan Police confirmed the award, which Mr Shu's lawyer said was a record payout, but a spokeswoman said: "We are likely to appeal against the size of the award rather than the verdict." She was unable to say if an investigation is to be set up into the conduct of officers involved.

Police had gone to his home over a dispute involving a tenant. He was arrested after refusing to allow the officers in.

As Mr Shu celebrated his victory today, his lawyer, Sidqi Khan, said: "My client was grabbed by the arms which were twisted up his back and then handcuffed behind him. He was also held in a neck lock which is now illegal and not taught to police officers."

"They punched and kicked him in the van and he was kicked in the kidneys. Another policeman used his back as a footstool and the driver turned round and insulted him verbally saying he had got no more than he deserved. The charge officer told him, 'I've never arrested a Chink before.'"

"When he was released at 11pm that night they threw him into the street in just jeans and flip-flops. He had to walk two miles home, because they refused to let him call a taxi."

Mr Khan said when Mr Shu reached his home, the front door was wide open and his stereo and other property had been stolen.

Doctors at London's King's College Hospital found that Mr Shu had extensive bruising to his back and kidneys. He was passing blood and decided to make a formal complaint to the Police Complaints Commission. Although a police surgeon confirmed the injuries, the complaint was rejected and the hairdresser then decided to sue.

Following a four-day civil hearing at Central London County Court, the jury decided in Mr Shu's favour and awarded him £20,000 in compensatory damages and £200,000 in exemplary damages.

A statement on behalf of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, said: "We believe the award in this case to be excessive and we are looking to appeal against the size of the award but not the verdict. An application to appeal was lodged with the court almost at once. A police spokeswoman added: "No disciplinary action has or will be taken against the officers involved and none is planned. They continue with their normal duties."

The 32-year-old hairdresser who arrived in London from Hong Kong nine years ago, later said: "Finally I've got justice. I'm really happy with what the jury have done. I feel terribly relieved."

He said: "I still don't understand why the police did what

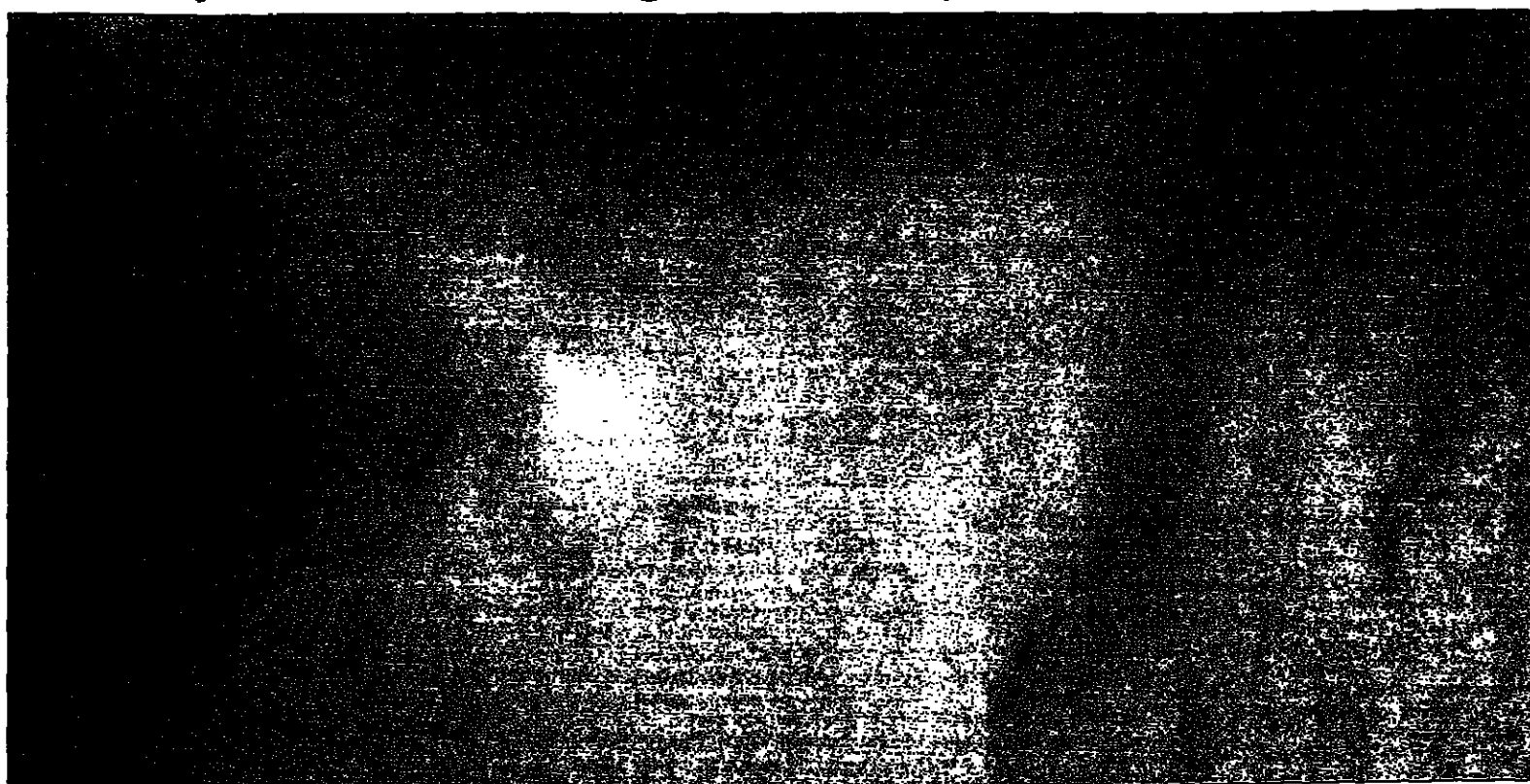
they did. The past three-and-a-half years have been like hell for me. Every time I thought about what happened, it was just anger."

"I hope this money will send a very strong message to the police. If it had been only £3,000 or £4,000 it would have been different. I'm sure it will make a difference for the future."

"I need a break after this week. Every single detail was gone through in court. It was really exhausting. Psychologically, it has been difficult for me."

He added: "Now I feel happiness and depression. Happiness because my case came to court and people believed my story, depression because of all the lies."

Comet Hyakutake comes in range for a close-up – 9 million miles from earth



A long tail: The comet Hyakutake in a photograph taken with a Wide Field Planetary Camera on board the Nasa Hubble Telescope, in orbit round the earth, on Monday when the comet was 9.3 million miles distant. The image covers an area 2,070 miles across. Photograph: Nasa

PC found guilty of karate attack

A Scottish police officer was yesterday found guilty of launching an unprovoked karate attack on a teenager being held in police cells.

The hearing at Aberdeen Sheriff Court was told how Constable Colin Leask, a 29-year-old martial arts expert, kicked 19-year-old Kevin McGeachy in the groin before launching a flurry of blows to the suspect's head and finally throwing him to the ground.

Leask, who took up karate and martial arts when he was 12-years-old, had denied the assault which took place last July.

The court was told that Mr McGeachy had been arrested for drugs offences and taken to Grampian police headquarters in Aberdeen for a strip search.

Other officers in the cells witnessed Leask carrying out the attack which left the teenager lying on the ground bleeding heavily from the head.

Giving evidence on his own behalf yesterday Leask, who weighs 18 stone, claimed he had only used self-defence techniques on Mr McGeachy because he feared he was about to be attacked. Leask, who gave a demonstration in court of the martial arts skills he claims to have used on Mr McGeachy, said his punching power amounted to three times his body weight and could cause serious injuries to opponents.

Sheriff Graeme Warner deferred sentence until 15 April for social inquiry and community service reports.

Convicted killer rejects parole in denial of guilt

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

A man jailed for a killing he says he did not commit, will today refuse to leave Long Lartin jail at the end of his prison sentence in a protestation of his innocence.

Patrick McCann – jailed largely on the evidence of his own family – says he will decline to leave the cell where he has served six years of a 10-year sentence, until Michael Howard, the Home Secretary refers his case back to the Court of Appeal or his innocence is established.

The move presents the Prison Service coping with overcrowded jails with an unusual problem. Usually those refusing to leave do so, because of personal reasons – fear, agoraphobia, difficulties at home – and counselling normally works. A spokeswoman said yesterday: "We would meet a protest in the same way and hope that solves the problem."

McCann, 40, was jailed in June 1990 for the manslaughter of Richard Holdsworth, in Cardiff after a drunken binge with his family. He was accused of suffocating Holdsworth and robbing him of cash. A previous trial had to be abandoned after a jury could not agree a verdict.

But according to McCann's supporters, the case against him was always weak.

There was evidence suggesting that Mr Holdsworth may have died of natural causes. Further, there was no forensic

evidence linking McCann to Mr Holdsworth's flat. Of the 167 items tested none put him at the scene of the crime, but there was evidence, including fingerprints, placing his accusers in the flat. They included his sisters, Bridget and Susan.

The credibility of these witnesses has since been called into question. Susan was sentenced to four years for robbery after Mr Holdsworth's money was found in her possession – she claimed McCann had given it to her – but she has since absconded from jail and is now believed to be living in Ireland.

And medical records show that Bridget – who has since died and whose evidence about the killing was crucial to McCann's conviction – revealed she suffered alcoholic neuropathy. From tape-recordings of her interviews with police, experts have now concluded that she betrayed signs of being open to suggestibility.

This new evidence was submitted to Mr Howard last year, asking him to refer the case to the Court of Appeal. The file is still under consideration. In the meantime, McCann maintains he will not leave prison on parole.

He said yesterday: "I have protested my innocence from day one. The case against me was absolutely ridiculous. I should never have been charged when forensic evidence proved that I had not even been into Mr Holdsworth's flat and all of my accusers have been in it."

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GPs told to ask more for non-core services

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Family doctors are being told they should stop providing care for patients in nursing and residential homes and for highly dependent patients living at home unless they are paid extra for the work.

A document being sent to all 35,000 family doctors says they should also decline to advise health authorities on purchasing health care, should not take blood, treat minor injuries, remove stitches after operations, provide home care after day case surgery, prescribe a range of expensive and hi-tech drugs, undertake vasectomies, or treat piles by injection without a contract to do so from health authorities or other purchasers.

The work - all of which is already undertaken by at least some GPs - should not be undertaken without extra pay-

ment, according to the British Medical Association's family doctors' committee. The advice comes in a paper which will become BMA policy if approved at a conference in June.

The aim is to provide a restricted definition of what the existing GPs "core contract" is ahead of negotiations with Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, over a new deal aimed at shifting into general practice more work traditionally done in hospitals.

GPs' leaders complain that significant amounts of hospital work - such as longer term care of the elderly - have already slid into general practice with, in most cases, no extra payment. Defining a "core contract" before discussion on the transfer of other work - such as minor injury centres, care for the mentally ill and more complex drug and diagnostic techniques - is "crucial" according to Dr Ian

Bogle, chairman of the BMA's general medical services committee, which is warning of falling recruitment to general practice and low morale.

The BMA cannot instruct GPs to stop doing the work - but its advice is that if "health authorities do not wish to purchase this work, then it won't be done", Dr Bogle says.

For providing some items - care in nursing and residential homes, or hormone implants - GP leaders may seek national negotiations. Other items from the list include mentally ill patients under supervision orders, varicose-vein ligation and screening for diabetes, induced eye disease other than glaucoma, a range of more serious minor surgical procedures.

The paper's recommendations provide "a weapon for GPs to use with their health authorities in local negotiations", a spokesman for the

BMA said. It is issuing the guidance unilaterally, not planning to negotiate with the Department of Health over it.

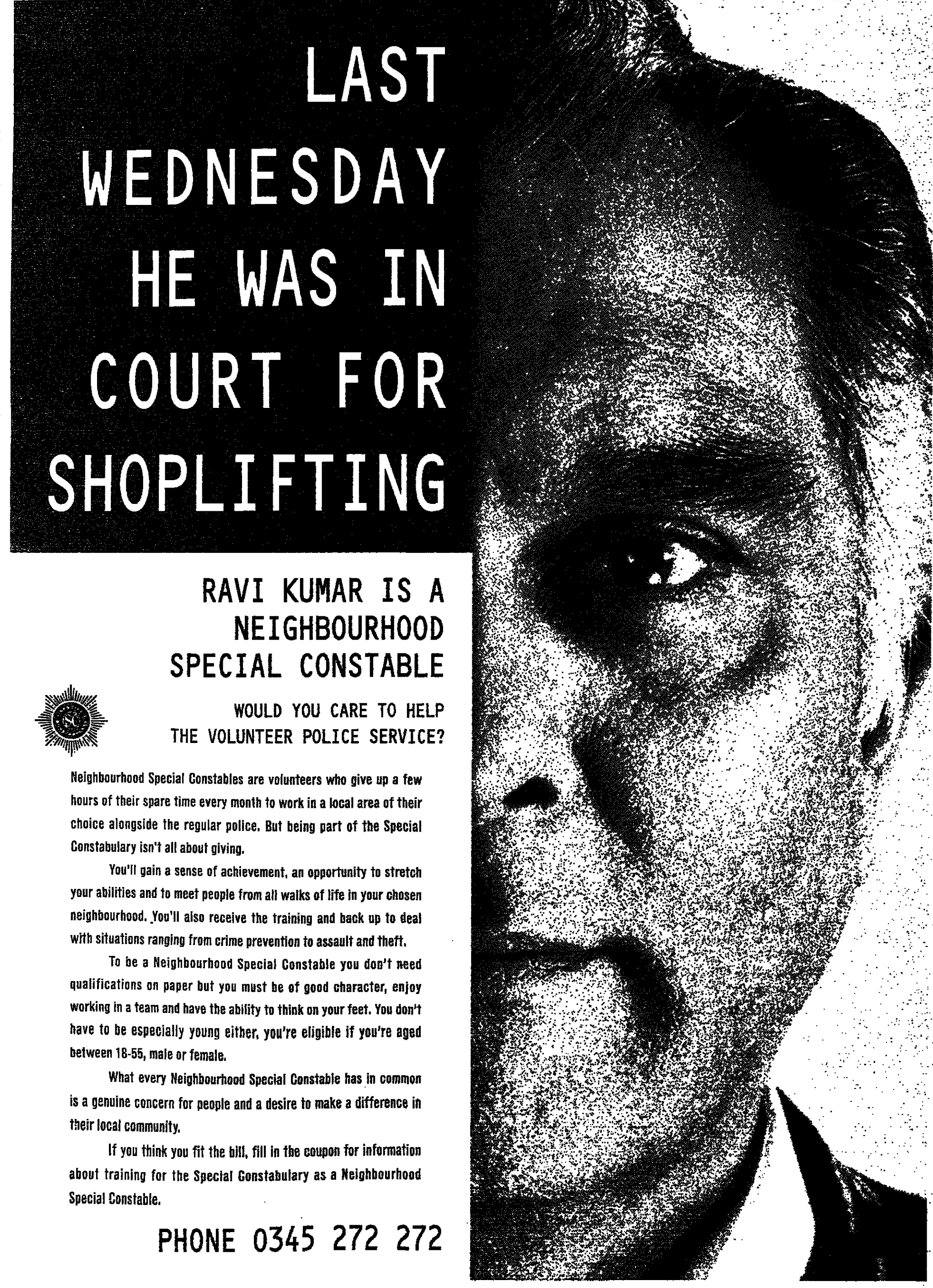
Family doctors choosing to provide the "non-core" services should be convinced they are financially attractive and that they offer a reasonable profit margin. "The end result should be an increase in GP income," the document says.

Defining the "core" service enables GPs to say no to new work, but yes "if they consider it to be appropriate and if sufficient resources are available."

The document concedes there are risks in attempting to define in a more restrictive way the work of family doctors. GPs' clinical freedom to choose what services patients receive could be reduced, management may take a more intrusive interest in their work and others may compete to provide non-core services.



Sotiles sensation: Ball chair designed by Eero Aarnio in 1965 (est. £2,200-£2,800) having an airing in New Bond Street yesterday before auction at Sotheby's sale of post-1930s design on 1 April. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid



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Son of Nigerian activist loses asylum appeal

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

A man whose pro-democracy activist father has "disappeared" since being deported to his native Nigeria has failed in his bid at the Court of Appeal to remain in the UK.

Ade Onibiyo had claimed his life could be at risk if he too were sent to Nigeria where his father, Abdul, 54, "vanished without trace" following his own forced removal last October. But three judges yesterday upheld the Home Secretary's refusal to grant Mr Onibiyo political asylum.

However, in an important asylum test case decision, the judges ruled that, contrary to the Home Office's contention, asylum seekers did have a right to make a second application for refugee status during a single stay in the UK. Mr Howard had legally and properly exercised his powers in concluding there was no "fresh claim" for asylum.

The Master of the Rolls, Sir Thomas Bingham, sitting with two other judges, refused Mr Onibiyo leave to appeal to the House of Lords, but his lawyers will now ask the Law Lords direct to hear the case.

In the mean time the student, who has been in detention at Campfield, in Oxfordshire, for a year, will not be sent back to Nigeria.

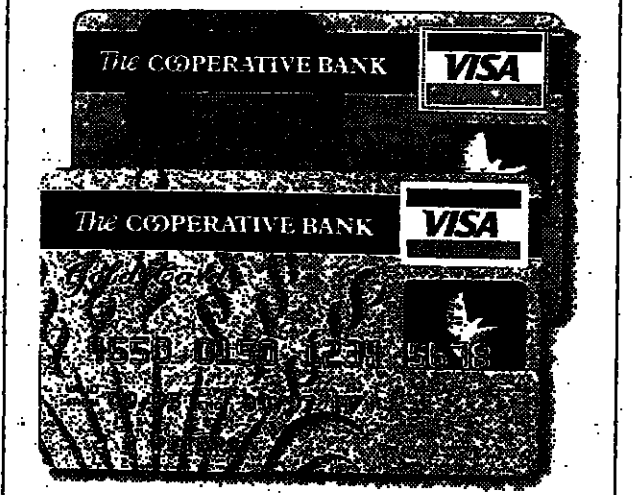
Sir Thomas said Ade Onibiyo had relied on his father's disappearance and evidence of civil rights abuses in Nigeria, including the execution last November of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other pro-democracy activists in Nigeria. But he added: "There is, however, no evidence that the applicant's father has been detained, and the Nigeria High Commission has publicly asserted that he has not been detained." It was extremely unlikely that there would be "officially inspired" persecution of a young man who had not set foot in Nigeria since the age of 11, and who had not pursued any political activity of any kind during his long stay in the UK, he said.

But outside court, Mr Onibiyo's sister, Lola, said she was now fearful that her brother and other members of her family could suffer the same fate as her father. "We are being asked by the British Government to prove that our father is safe but we cannot get any evidence out of Nigeria." She said that her mother, Joyce, and two younger sisters now faced deportation.

The Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn said: "The Onibiyo campaign has won an important case for every other asylum seeker. But the family is being asked to prove a negative in order to win asylum for Ade."

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MPs seek 'spy master' for intelligence services

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

An all-party committee yesterday clashed with the Prime Minister over the threat to British spies caused by a Russian mole in the American Central Intelligence Agency. The appointment of a ministerial "spy master" with responsibility for MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, the Government communications headquarters, was

also raised by members of the committee as a possible solution to past failures properly to disseminate intelligence information around Whitehall.

The Security and Intelligence Committee, chaired by Tom King, a former Cabinet minister, warned that British agents' lives could have been lost after secrets were betrayed by Aldrich Ames, a CIA officer, and claimed that ministers had been inadequately briefed.

"We are seriously concerned over the extent and nature of the damage that has been done to British interests by the traitorous activities of the CIA officer Aldrich Ames," said the committee. It was also worried that "tainted" intelligence had been passed to ministers by agents compromised by Ames. But John Major brushed aside the fears of the committee, which he set up. He said in a letter that after reviewing

the evidence, "damage to the UK was not great" and he was satisfied that ministers "were adequately briefed". The Prime Minister added: "These are serious issues and I look forward to seeing your conclusions following your further investigations into these matters."

The committee complained in its annual report published yesterday that the British intelligence services had launched their own inquiry into the damage caused by the Ames affair in November 1995 - almost two years after his treachery was first exposed.

Archie Hamilton, a former defence minister and a member of the committee, said: "We are concerned that he was an extremely bad agent. He used to get drunk; he fell asleep in the office; he had an expensive car and a large house; nobody checked on this; he merely said his wife was very rich. It does

cause great concern for anyone who has to look at the security organisation."

The committee reported that Ames had identified 13 CIA agents in Russia; nine were executed and three were imprisoned. "It is vital that all possible lessons are learnt on the security aspects of this case with the minimum of delay."

The report highlighted a failure in the present ministerial structure to have a proper

overview of the security and intelligence services. The agencies reported to senior ministers who had other responsibilities. Lord Howe, a former Foreign Secretary, said he had been given an overview of the intelligence and security services for the first time as a member of the committee, although MI6 and GCHQ had reported to him when he was a Cabinet minister.

Mr King said that no minister, with the exception of the Prime Minister, had an overview of the intelligence information being supplied by MI5, MI6 and GCHQ. In Germany, there was a minister with responsibility for the intelligence and security services.

The Prime Minister promised to improve the dissemination of intelligence information around Whitehall in the wake of the Scott report into the arms-to-Iraq affair.

By-election battle: Labour leader tours seat while launching training policy

Blair plugs in for the campaign to come

JOHN RENTOU

Tony Blair raised the stakes in the Staffordshire South East by-election yesterday by in effect admitting that Labour could not afford to fail to win the seat from the Conservatives.

"This is a very important campaign," he told party workers. "We can't take anything for granted."

The Labour leader, with his eyes increasingly focused on a possible October general election, launched the party's modest but specific training plans in Tamworth, the core of the seat vacated by the death of the Tory MP Sir David Lightbown.

In a dry run for the technology which will dominate the general election, Mr Blair spoke to a news conference in London via a satellite link.

Mr Blair used a computer-aided machine tools workshop in Tamworth as a backdrop for his announcement of a £150 training grant each for one million workers, provided they contribute £25.

Labour has tried to fight the by-election as a government in waiting. Gavin Strang, the shadow agriculture minister, on Wednesday interrupted a



Live wire: Labour leader Tony Blair during a satellite link from a Tamworth factory yesterday. Photograph: Steve Hill

photo-call on a dairy farm in the constituency to telephone Franz Fischler, the European agriculture commissioner, to demand EU assistance for stricken cattle farmers.

But the beef scare has blown apart the Tory strategy for the by-election, which was to build on party unity on Europe and continuing economic good news with their tough, ex-army candidate, Jimmy James.

At the edge-of-town Sainsbury's, it is only the hard-core who are buying beef or voting Tory. One former Tory voter

said she would not be voting for Mr James. "They've known about beef for a long time and they must have known it would come out. They hoped they could bluff their way through, but I'm not buying any."

Tamworth is quintessential new Labour territory. A pleasant, prosperous Midlands town surrounded by large Birmingham commuter houses. The people are fed up with the Government and the Labour council, whose leader Brian Jenkins is the party's candidate, has achieved the highest acco-

lade possible - no one has a bad word to say about it.

Labour's dilemma is that it won a similar West Midlands seat, Dudley West, from the Tories with a record post-war swing of 29 per cent in December 1994. Anything less than that could be portrayed as a recovery by the Tories. But even before the beef scare, a Birmingham Evening Mail poll conducted in the street had given Labour 66 per cent, 50 points ahead of the Tories on 16 with the Liberal Democrats third on 13 per cent.

The Liberal Democrats' Jeannette Davy, meanwhile, trends the logically challenged line of admitting her chances are slim. "If we don't win here, we would like to get as many votes as possible" and that she "would like to see a general election as soon as possible", without endorsing a Labour win as her next-best outcome.

□ Staffordshire South East 1992 general election: D Lightbown (C) 29,180; B Jenkins (Lab) 21,988; G Penlington (Lib Dem) 5,540. Conservative majority 7,192.

Spying makes a comeback as Russia seeks Britain's secrets

JASON BENNETT
Crime Correspondent

Increasing numbers of Russian spies are being sent to Britain to obtain information about military, economic and political targets, according to a report published by MI5 yesterday. The second information booklet issued by the Security Service also states that Irish terrorism is still the single largest threat.

The book is part of the service's attempt to be more open and comes as Dame Stella Rimington hands over her post as Director-General of MI5 to Stephen Lander.

Among a review of MI5's

work it says that although the threat of espionage from the former Soviet Union has greatly diminished, there has been a recent upsurge in spying by Russia and other countries.

The report says: "In the UK, after a period of initial retrenchment following the rise to power of President Yeltsin, both the Russian civilian and military intelligence services have renewed their efforts to post intelligence officers to London."

It adds that the majority of spies are run by foreign handlers based in Britain.

Counter-espionage takes up about a quarter of MI5's efforts. The service employs about

2,000 people and has a budget of £800m. Fighting international terrorism takes up about a third of its resources and Irish terrorism absorbs 39 per cent - down 5 per cent since last year. This trend is expected to be reversed since the breaking of the IRA ceasefire last month.

Under a Bill currently going through Parliament, MI5 will for the first time be allowed to investigate traditional serious crime, such as money laundering. Among some of its other current work is the investigation of attempts by foreign countries to obtain material and expertise for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons from Britain.

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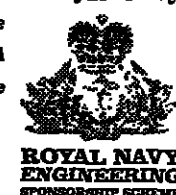
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EMU rift overshadows push for closer union

ANDREW GUMBEL
Turin
IMRE KARACS
Bonn

Today's European summit meeting in Turin may be meant to concentrate on overhauling and harmonising the Union's institutions, but a shadow has been cast over the proceedings by deep differences between member states over the increasingly delicate creation of a single currency.

The issue symbolises one of the basic difficulties which the Inter-Governmental Conference faces: how to build a European Union which is flexible enough to admit diversity, yet solid enough not to disintegrate. By creating a plan that meant some states would enter monetary union, while others would not, the Maastricht treaty also created the germ of a two-speed Europe.

The issue of monetary union, which had lain dormant for some time, returned this week when a Franco-German summit in the south of France laid down plans to create a new currency regime to accommodate countries whose economies were not strong enough to join the single currency at its launch date in 1999.

The proposal, known as EMS 2, has been greeted with scepticism in the countries most likely to be forced to join it, and faces an immediate credibility problem because Britain, which has already opted out of the single currency, wants nothing to do with it.

According to a well-placed official banking source, the project may be economically viable but will almost certainly be politically unacceptable unless Britain can be persuaded to take part. Countries such as Italy, which are nowhere near meeting the convergence criteria for monetary union, will need some persuading that the system is in their interests and not just a palliative disguising Franco-German domination of the EU.

"This is a system that stands no chance of working," the former Italian prime minister and economic expert, Giuliano Amato, said yesterday, querying the wisdom of reviving a currency regime battered to pieces in the financial marketplace in 1992.

All this indicates that the relationship between Europe's hard core and its outer layer will prove more difficult to handle than anticipated.

Karl Lamers, foreign affairs

BUILDING EUROPE

spokesman of Germany's governing Christian Democrats and a key associate of Mr Kohl, has in the past advocated the creation of a "hard core" of states within the EU, committed to deeper political integration than laggards, such as Britain.

But in a paper presented on the eve of the Turin summit by him and Wolfgang Schäuble, the deputy leader of the Christian Democrats, there was little evidence of this zeal. Member states should be allowed to develop varying depths of integration within the union, it said, "but the core is not impenetrable".

"We need a vanguard," the paper said. Euro-sceptic states ought not to hinder deeper integration among the "vanguard", nor should they be locked out of an elite club. This is a far cry from the vision outlined by Mr Lamers two years ago, which would have relegated Britain to a second division in Europe. Since then, Germany has had to lower its sights, partly because it has not found support for its goals in other EU states, but mainly because it has been diverted from this course by its preoccupations with the more immediate task of ensuring Europe's common currency is born on time.

These issues are likely to be relegated to the sidelines at Turin; indeed the Italian Foreign Ministry, which is organising the event, has been doing its best to ensure the occasion passes off as uneventfully as possible.

But the subject of monetary union is likely to come into the open at a two-day meeting of European economic and finance ministers in Verona next month, and remain on the agenda for several months.

For all the talk of establishing "flexibility" in the EU's founding treaties to cope with the enlargement of Europe to 20 or 30 states, monetary union has already created the need for such flexibility. But it has not delivered the mechanisms to let it happen.

In the longer term, whatever the IGC decides, everyone in Turin knows it is the geometry of monetary union that will shape the Union long after this meeting is forgotten.

TURIN CONFERENCE



Flag day: A policeman outside the conference centre in Turin. Over 5,000 officers will be deployed to ensure security

Labour shows sceptical side

NICOLE VEASH

Fifty Labour MPs have called on Tony Blair to rule out a single currency, warning that monetary union would require huge cuts in British jobs and services.

The signed demand is one of the first indications since Mr Blair became party leader of the potential level of unrest if he were to take Britain into a single currency as prime minister. Nearly one in five of the party's MPs supported the "Europe Isn't Working" statement.

Alan Simpson, MP for Nottingham South, said a single currency would lead to high levels of unemployment and would drag the country into a "bigger hole" without the consent of the British people. "The European agenda should be the people's agenda, and not the bankers' agenda. Our campaign is about democracy and not just economics."

Denzil Davies, a former Treasury minister and MP for Llanelli, said his party's early European euphoria had ended. And he warned that if Labour won the election, Gordon Brown would have to address single currency factors in his first Budget as Chancellor. "It's something we can't run away from. If we go into government

as a party without a clear view, this issue would dominate right from the beginning," he said.

Signatories to the statement include Diane Abbott, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Ken Livingstone, and Peter Shore.

They claim the cost of introducing the single currency in jobs and services would be equivalent to cutting half of all NHS trusts, or all secondary schools and two-thirds of primaries, or the entire cost of fire service and law and order provision in Britain - estimated at £12bn. "Stuck with mass unemployment and deflationary economics, the Euro would be the breaking of Europe, not its binding," the statement argued.

But suggestions that the Euro-sceptics would be willing to do deals with counterparts on the Tory benches were dismissed. "We don't have a common purpose," Mr Simpson said.

The development was seized upon, however, by the Tory chairman Brian Mawhinney, who said: "For months, they seek to create the impression that the party is united in its mad dash towards transferring powers from Westminster to Brussels. Here again Labour is saying one thing and doing another."

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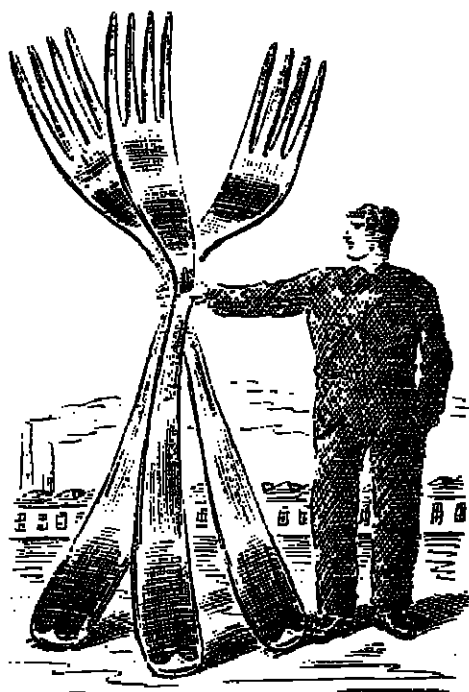
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A BIGGER CHOICE

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NORTHWEST KLM

TURIN CONFERENCE

Beef crisis brings Britain into EU fold

SARAH HELM
Turin

"We can best shape our national destiny by working in partnership with our closest neighbours," wrote John Major in his forward to the Government's White Paper on Europe three weeks ago. "Europe," he declared, should be about "co-operation, shared purpose" and "common enterprise".

The statements will return to haunt the Prime Minister today at the launch in Turin of the inter-governmental conference on European reform.

Britain's willingness to work in partnership with Europe has always been doubted by other members. Rarely, however, has its insularity or inability to understand the problems of its European partners been so starkly exposed as since the crisis broke last week over British beef.

European officials and veterinary scientists are still fuming over the failure of the British Government to give the Commission prior warning of the BSE announcement to the commons 10 days ago. Two

days earlier European agriculture ministers had met in Brussels, but Douglas Hogg, Britain's representative, had failed to attend. Britain already knew the beef scare was about to break but Franz Fischler, the agriculture commissioner, heard the news via the media.

Had Britain consulted with the Commission, officials say a co-operative way of resolving the crisis might have been found. Whether the export ban could have been averted is doubtful, but it might have been less Draconian. Prior warning would have given Britain's partners time to help draw up a considered response, which might have prevented public fear spreading through Europe. It is this fear, and the inevitable collapse in consumer confidence, that has necessitated the world-wide ban.

Why did Britain not consult? Surely, given the country's massive beef export trade to Europe the Government must have considered the impact of the health scare for European consumers and markets. Commission officials say all the evidence suggests that the Government never once considered the European dimension. "It was not simply that they didn't care ... Europe simply didn't enter their calculations," said one.

The imposition of the EU beef export ban has inevitably provoked howls of anti-European protest in Britain. But from the European perspective the necessity for some sort of ban was clear. The measure was not imposed to punish Britain, but to protect Europe from BSE. The collapse in confidence in British beef could not be allowed to devastate the entire European beef industry.

As the ban has come into effect the Commission has made clear it is ready to help pay compensation, but only when Britain comes to "consult" over what eradication plans it proposes. Even this the Government has been reluctant to do.

For the leaders meeting in Turin the paradox of the British position is clear. The go-it-alone policy over beef has brought home just how much

Britain needs Europe. Late in the day the Government is now showing readiness to co-operate and to accept that it has no choice but to come to Europe for financial help. A deal is expected to be drafted today.

The broader lessons for European "co-operation" and for the search for a common purpose at the IGC are as yet unclear. The devastating effect of the beef ban on British industry cannot yet be assessed. As the worst effects are felt, it may be that the ban hardens British public opinion even further against European integration.

What Britain's partners hope, however, as they meet Mr Major in Turin, is that the beef crisis will help them emphasise the necessity for Britain to recognise that its interests are inextricably tied to Europe.

Jacques Chirac, the French President, and Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, will today undoubtedly take the opportunity to offer sympathy to Britain over the crisis and speak of the need to respond as a union working, in Mr Major's words, in a "common enterprise".



Concerned: The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, who advises against a partial monetary union

Photograph: P

Clarke calculates the ins and outs of EMU

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

SINGLE CURRENCY

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke said yesterday that Britain's decision whether or not to join the single European currency would depend on the relationship between the countries taking part and those staying out — the "ins" and the "outs".

"If a group decides to go ahead and form a European monetary union, the key question is: Would going in be more helpful to our economy than staying out? It depends how they intend to proceed and what will be the relation between the ins and the outs," Mr Clarke told a House of Lords committee.

An accord between France and Germany earlier this week, requiring the outs to join a new exchange rate mechanism with the single currency, sparked new tensions between the like-minded members of the single currency and other countries, including Britain, on the eve of the Inter-Governmental Conference in Turin. Mr Clarke yesterday stressed the importance of avoiding conflict.

"It cannot be in anyone's interest in the European Union for friction between the ins and outs to start to develop," he said. He added that it was high time the EU addressed the question of this relationship. The British Government is

thoroughly opposed to a new exchange rate mechanism. Mr Clarke rejected the argument made by the French in particular, that countries outside the single currency would try to benefit from competitive devaluations against the euro.

"There are Frenchmen who believe the British cunningly contrived Black Wednesday [when the pound dropped out of the existing Exchange Rate Mechanism], he said. But he argued that there was no competitive advantage in debasing the currency.

The Chancellor told the committee that he was very concerned about the risk the partial monetary union would be divisive. "It would create enormous strains within the European Union if a hard core took all the decisions," he said.

He also expressed concern that the European Central Bank would take decisions without reference to the interests of countries outside the European currency bloc, although EU finance ministers have started to address this issue, he said.

Mr Clarke added that himself was sympathetic to the idea of a single currency, but was a "complete myth" that he was determined to join come what may. He could see himself arguing either way depending on the circumstances.

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What's the connection between Milwaukee and Beer?

NORTHWEST

international

Old bruiser set to give Yeltsin a bloody nose

Moscow — Anyone who asks General Alexander Lebed about the injuries he received during his boxing career is likely to be treated to one of the more disturbing stunts to be performed by a public figure. He places his thumb on his nose and presses hard. As its bone structure was smashed in a fight, it crumples, making his battered profile entirely flat out for a ridge of bushy eyebrows. The general proudly shows off this trick as proof that he was a serious combatant, willing to get hurt in order to triumph. "What kind of fighter is that doesn't get injured?" he asked, with the same unflinching glare that Mike Tyson uses to mesmerise his prey.

He does not need to spell out its larger meaning, which is that he wants Russians to believe that he brings the same qualities — courage and purposefulness — to the political arena.

Four months ago, the reserve general was one of the most widely discussed figures in Russian politics. Almost everyone expected his party, the Congress of Russian Communities, to do well in December's parliamentary elections, predicting that he would be a strong candidate in the presidential elections this June. But the party crashed, winning less than 5 per cent of the vote.

It became clear the party was damaged by a personality feud between General Lebed and its co-leader, Yuri Skokov. Overnight, the general lost his in-boy status, and it looked

As the fledgling 'Third Force' group gathers strength, alarm bells ring in the Kremlin. Phil Reeves reports

as if Russians would no longer be treated to endless television interviews in which they marvelled as much at his astonishingly low voice as his politics.

Until now. With only a few weeks to go before the first round of the presidential poll, General Lebed is preparing to enter the ring again. He has declared his candidacy, and has revealed he is likely to be part of a new group called "Third Force", a coalition aimed at sweeping up the anti-Yeltsin, anti-Communist vote.

Although the group is in embryonic form, its leaders are also expected to include Svyatoslav Fyodorov, a veteran politician whose skills as an eye-surgeon made him a national celebrity. Significantly, there is also talk

that it has recruited the liberal economist, Grigory Yavlinsky, whose Yabloko party came fourth last December, but who has been slipping in the polls.

The group's plans will be under close scrutiny in the Kremlin, where potential vote-stealers are regarded with alarm. Opinion surveys show President Yeltsin's popularity rising: a *Moscow Times*/CNN poll had him in second place with 14 per cent, behind the Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov's 19.1 per cent.

If the trend continues, the President should make it into a run-off, giving him a good chance of retaining power. But there remains a chance that the anti-communist vote could be split between Mr Yeltsin and

another party, threatening his chances of making it to the second round.

This is not a prospect which appears to disturb General Lebed, who claims to be after the middle-of-the-road — neither "red nor white" — electorate. "There are lots of people who wouldn't support either the left or the right," he told the *Independent*. "They are not radicals, but believe in common sense... They are the Third Force."

He said he had "no fears" of a split vote, arguing that the parliamentary election demonstrated that the left wing has about 25 per cent of the vote, while the right has about 15 per cent. "Some 60 per cent of the votes lie in between. I'm working for them."

Third Force's political agenda is likely to be based on broad themes such as improved living standards, not least because its leaders' ideologies differ. General Lebed, for example, is a moderate nationalist, with a scattering of hard-line tendencies, including a refusal (mindful of the prejudices of the public) to condemn Stalin.

Dr Fyodorov is an exponent of "people's capitalism" — an economy based on joint-stock companies in which all employees own shares and have equal voting rights, plus widespread private land ownership. The 3,500 employees at his eye institute in Moscow are paid a share of the profits rather than a salary, an incentive scheme that has amassed enough wealth for the institute to allow it to buy a big dacha-dotted stretch of the Moscow River, complete with restaurants, a yacht club and a stable of Arabian horses.

Once launched, the group would have a long road to travel, and little time. But all three men enjoy enough popularity in Russia to arouse attention in political circles; and together have the support of about 10 per cent of those surveyed by the *Moscow Times* and CNN. The general says that they would ultimately field only one candidate — the one who leads the polls.

Any party that assembles three such veterans under one banner is worth watching — on the off-chance that the general, with his men, will give Mr Yeltsin a nose as damaged as his own.



Ear to the ground: General Alexander Lebed, party leader of the Congress of Russian Communities, at a press conference in Moscow. Photograph: Finck Jockel/AP

Presidential aide returns to fold

Moscow — Anatoly Chubais, the market reformer whom Boris Yeltsin dropped from his cabinet earlier this year, yesterday said he had put emotions aside and joined the team working for the President's re-election because it was the only realistic way of saving Russia from a return to Communism, writes Helen Womack.

The revamped Communists, under Gennady Zyuganov, had no economic specialists and the chances of them turning out to be moderate after June's poll

were slim. Rather, they were likely to nationalise and even confiscate property. "The price of this [a Communist] victory will be terrible," he said.

Mr Chubais's decision to involve himself in the campaign will boost Mr Yeltsin, whose ratings have been rising. Mr Zyuganov remains the front-runner but some Russians have been put off by a Communist-inspired vote in the State Duma denouncing the dismantling of the Soviet Union. They have taken this to mean the true colours

of the Communists are not pink but dark red.

Mr Chubais, who was First Deputy Prime Minister until January, was blamed by Mr Yeltsin for the poor showing of the government party. Our Home is Russia, in December's parliamentary elections, won by the Communists.

Yesterday he said he would remain outside the government, even if Mr Yeltsin won, and from an independent position would tell the Kremlin leader unpalatable truths.

Tourists get a real feeling for dinosaurs

AVID USBORNE
New York

It may still be a long way from alising the *Jurassic Park* fantasy of regenerating dinosaurs, it, thanks to a new fossil discovery in the south-western US, we can at least imagine we're touching one.

Proclaiming itself the world's first "dinosaur-petting zoo", a new Mexico museum is inviting visitors to stroke the armour of a creature that roamed the Mexican plains and deserts 70 million years ago.

What they are touching is a cast taken from a section of fossilised skin of a duck-billed dinosaur discovered in the arid ranges. The sensation something close to feeling the aged tyres of a mountain bike, with a pattern of crimped, raised bumps.

"People who come here can touch the dinosaur's skin," says the exhibit's curator, Spencer Lucas, a paleontologist at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, in Albuquerque, said yesterday. "I think children will remember more than reading about dinosaurs in books."

The original fossil was uncovered five years ago by a geology student, but it was only last year that scientists realised it represented. "It's so hard that, as a trained palaeontologist, I didn't know what

the hell it was," Mr Lucas said. The fossil is about 10 foot long and 2 foot across and only a small section has been excavated for the museum's exhibit. Although about a dozen duck-billed dinosaur skin impressions have already been found around the world, Mr Lucas says this one is important because most of it is intact and in the ground.

"Only by studying it in the ground and in its proper context are we going to be able to figure out how the skin got to be preserved," he said.

The bones of the animal are also fossilised and are in place under the skin, although there is no sign of any muscle or other tissues.

The chance to "pet" the dinosaur comes only weeks after scientists in New Mexico unveiled separate plans to re-create the sounds that dinosaurs made by blowing air through the trombone-like cavities of a fossil of a duck-billed dinosaur's skull. They expect to hear a deeply resonating "moo".

What is likely to interest scientists most about the skin fossil is how tough it was, suggesting it evolved to combat carnivorous insects.

Mike Brett-Surman, a dinosaur specialist at the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, noted: "It brings to mind the picture of a Mesozoic mosquito with a Black and Decker drill."



Preserved: Mr Lucas with some of the fossilised skin. Visitors can 'pet' a cast of it. Photograph: AP

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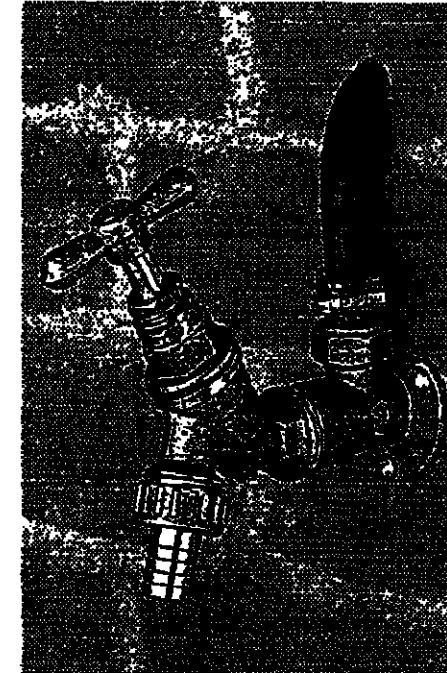
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Wickes ELECTRIC

Polish ex-leader faces trial over killings in 1970

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

A Polish court opened proceedings yesterday against the country's last Communist leader, Wojciech Jaruzelski, who has been indicted over the killing of at least 44 people during workers' protests in December 1970.

Mr Jaruzelski, 72, a retired general, was Poland's defence minister when the then Communist authorities ordered the army and police to shoot at civilians who were demonstrating against food price rises in Gdansk and other Baltic ports.

The Gdansk provincial court, granting Mr Jaruzelski's defence lawyers a request for more time to study the case, decided to reconvene in three months. The court also agreed to consider Mr Jaruzelski's request that the trial be turned over to Poland's State Tribunal, a body that handles cases involving senior government officials.

The former president and Communist Party leader is best remembered abroad for his declaration of martial law in

December 1981, to suppress Solidarity, the mass movement whose leaders eventually restored democracy in Poland in 1989 – paradoxically, with Mr Jaruzelski's co-operation.

A Polish parliamentary committee, possibly influenced by his own view that he acted to prevent a Soviet invasion, recommended last month that Mr Jaruzelski should not stand trial for imposing martial law.

For many Poles, the 1970 killings are as terrible a memory as the declaration of martial law. The Communist authorities initially tried to conceal the truth, partly by arranging secret, night-time burials of the dead workers.

But the events prepared the ground for the emergence of Solidarity in 1980 as the first free trade union in Communist Eastern Europe. Lech Walesa, the former Solidarity leader and first post-Communist president of Poland, used to say the 1970 killings on the Baltic coast were the decisive moment leading to his transformation from a humble shipyard electrician in Gdansk into a world-famous opposition leader.

Several dozen Solidarity supporters stood in front of the court yesterday, holding up banners reading "Communist crimes – genocide crimes" and demanding punishment for Mr Jaruzelski and 11 officials accused of instigating the shootings. "Revenge is not the purpose of this trial. It should restore trust in the justice system," Solidarity's leader in Gdansk, Jacek Rybicki, told the newspaper *Zycie Warszawy*.

Among those accused with Mr Jaruzelski are a former interior minister, a former deputy prime minister and nine former army and security police officers. Poland's reformed Communists, who were returned to power in free elections in 1993, reject opposition charges that they have sought to delay the case going to trial.

Polish lawyers say the trial could be the biggest in the nation's history, with 1,000 witnesses likely to be summoned.

An appeal court last week set aside the acquittal of two generals held responsible for the murder in 1984 of the popular pro-Solidarity priest, Father Jerzy Popieluszko.



Daughter and mother: Chelsea and Hillary Clinton at Istanbul's Blue Mosque yesterday. They also took in St Sophia Museum. Photograph: AP

Balkans' favourite granny sees it all

Consulting with oracles on the part of military and political leaders has a long and honourable history. In fact it is only in recent centuries that the practice has fallen from fashion. No doubt the modern obsession with scientific method has something to do with the change, but not one jot of foresight and predictability into the political sphere. Leaders are constantly and universally surprised by the twists and turns of history. Chamberlain was taken by surprise, Hitler was taken by surprise. Churchill was taken by surprise. More recently the various already forgotten Communist leaders in Eastern Europe were taken by surprise. And more recently still Margaret Thatcher, George Bush ... from their positions of maximum access to all available information, they got it wrong and paid the price. Bill Clinton is a certain winner in November, of course – which suddenly makes Bob Dole look rather a good bet.

All the more reason then to take Granny Vanga seriously. Granny lives in a remote mountain village in southern Bulgaria, near the border with Greece.

She is 85 years old and blind. But she can see clearly, into the future. And she is the most revered Bulgarian alive.

Compared with her, Hristo Stoevich, sadly unable to show off his own magic at Wembley on Wednesday, is a nobody.

Her pronouncements are always faithfully reported by Bulgaria's media and provide a much-needed source of comfort as the country makes its painful transition from Communism to democracy and a market-based economy.

Top politicians regularly travel from all over the Balkans and from Russia to seek her advice.

Her fellow octogenarian and former dictator Todor Zhivkov still keeps in touch and sent her gifts on her recent name-day, also the Orthodox Christian feast of the Annunciation.

And what was the substance of her pronouncement on this occasion? "Things will be difficult until May but thereafter they will improve," she foretold. There are familiar resonances here. Difficult to place at first, then quite unmistakable. This is our very own Kenneth Clarke.

The Chancellor has not been in southern Bulgaria recently, so far as I recall. But then, Granny Vanga does have a telephone.

PEOPLE

I am told by people who have been there that not much happens in Bulgaria, which no doubt makes prophesying a little easier than it might otherwise be. You can get away with the broader view and not get tripped up by the detail. This may also explain why Switzerland can seem an exciting place to live and ... yes ... fall in love. In 1991 President Zhelyu Zhelev appointed one Elena Kircheva as Sofia's ambassador to Bern. Unfortunately she seems to have met with bad company and, as those from the more genteel backgrounds may in such circumstances, succumbed. The company she succumbed to in the country where the cows might have a touch of the folie Anglaise but the people are as sane as cowbells, is Peter Hadzhidimitrov. Peter is obviously a touch schizophrenic. He is an admirer of Adolf Hitler but at the same time denies that the culmination of his hero's life's work, the Holocaust, ever took place. He has only lived in Switzerland since 1971, so perhaps a cure is in the offing. But his homeland – Bulgaria, again, – is not doing much to help. Unlike many East European coun-



Zhivkov: Often consults fortune-telling granny

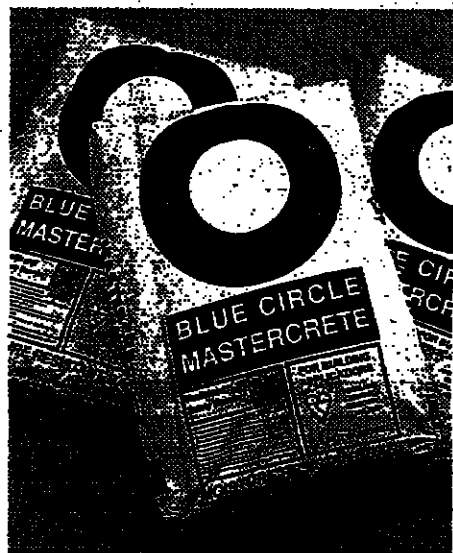
Bulgaria prides itself on lacking an anti-Semitic tradition. During the Second World War it refused to hand over its Jews to the Nazis, despite being a German ally. So it is deeply embarrassed by the marriage of its ambassador to Switzerland since 1971, so perhaps a cure is in the offing. But his homeland – Bulgaria, again, – is not doing much to help. Unlike many East European coun-

tries, Bulgaria prides itself on lacking an anti-Semitic tradition. During the Second World War it refused to hand over its Jews to the Nazis, despite being a German ally. So it is deeply embarrassed by the marriage of its ambassador to Switzerland since 1971, so perhaps a cure is in the offing. But his homeland – Bulgaria, again, – is not doing much to help. Unlike many East European coun-

James Roberts

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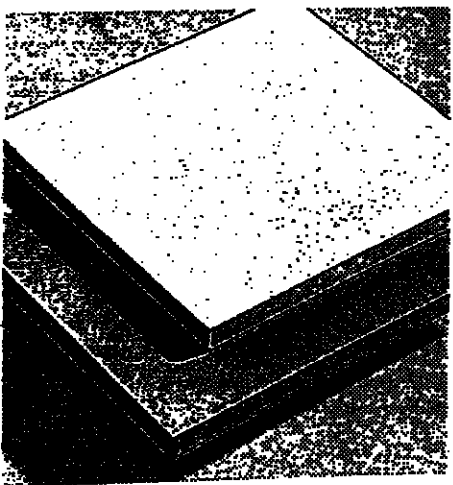


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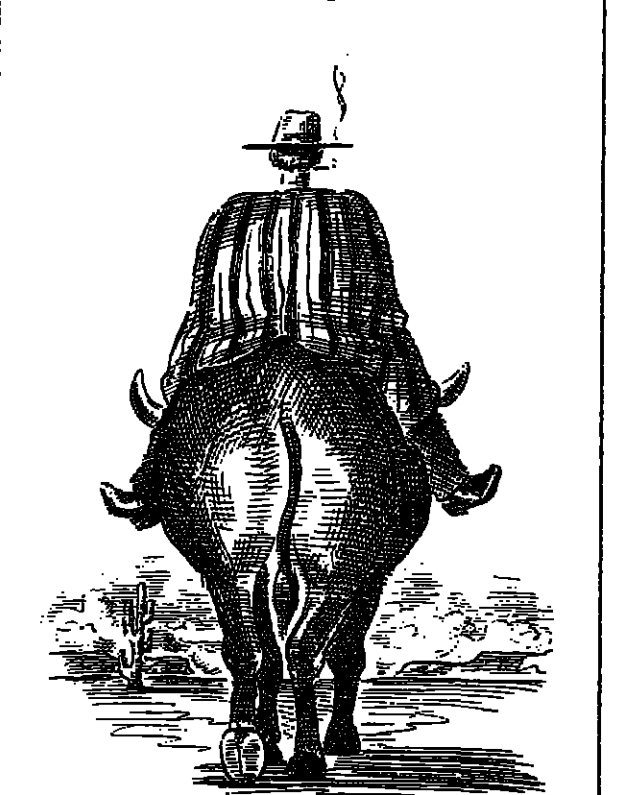
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What's the connection between Clint and Buffalo?



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international

Police cave in to Inkatha show of force

ROBERT BLOCH
Johannesburg

The first group of the 10,000 Zulus to hit the streets of Johannesburg yesterday in a controversial demonstration seemed to materialise out of thin air. The Johannesburg district was deserted most of the morning, but for a few dozen soldiers and police agents who cradled shotguns against their flak jackets at some road blocks.

The police stared at a wall of Zulu demonstrators in a variety of costumes, ranging from leopard-skin loincloths to pink dresses. The Zulu impi, or regiment, waved its traditional weapons in a taunting manner at the police and in clear defiance of the law.

The police vowed only hours before to uphold the week-old Dangerous Weapons Act. But in such circumstances, even with their shotguns, any attempt to disarm the crowd would have been foolhardy. Instead, the police talked into their two-way radios and gave way before the prancing warriors and ululating women.

It was one of the few tense moments in a day of protest which passed with surprisingly few incidents. The demonstration was called to commemorate the shooting to death of eight Inkatha supporters outside the Shell House building, the headquarters of President Nelson Mandela's ANC, two years ago, on 28 March. It became known as the Shell House massacre and is still a source of friction between the ANC and Inkatha.

Tension was high before the demonstration as both the ANC and its Inkatha rivals traded accusations of plots to provoke a similar incident. But in the end, as is often the case in South Africa these days, it was the law which had to yield.

One police officer assured me that "particularly dangerous" weapons, such as spears and axes, had been confiscated. In the next breath he admitted it had been done in very few cases and only when the police were dealing with small, "manageable" groups of Zulus.

A strong show of force by the police and the army, who cordoned off parts of the city centre with razor wire, as well as the police's pragmatic approach to enforcing the law, were credited for allowing the demonstration to pass without trouble.

But the police's failure to make good its threat has left the government looking weak, and has reinforced an impression that people in South Africa may flout the laws they dislike. The Dangerous Weapons Act, passed last week at the urging of Mr Mandela and his Safety and Security Minister, Sydney Mufamadi, was aimed at reducing the political violence between ANC and Inkatha in KwaZulu-Natal.

Shin Bet under fire over murder of Rabin

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Yitzhak Rabin's bodyguards believed the Israeli radical right was more likely to throw stones and tomatoes than to try to murder the prime minister, according to the official report on the assassination, which was published yesterday.

The three-man commission, headed by Meir Shamgar, a former president of the Supreme Court and which spent four months investigating security lapses which allowed Yigal Amir to kill Rabin so easily, decided there was no evidence of a conspiracy. Although Karmi Gillon, then head of the Shin Bet (GSS) security service, knew the danger of Rabin being attacked by a member of the far right was increasing, he did

foremost the Prime Minister. The Shin Bet did not do enough, in terms of adjusting its protection method to the new risks, to cope with the worsening threat, and did not ensure that its bodyguards properly understood the severity of this threat.

The commission rejected the thesis that the need for politicians to have direct contact with the public made the task of protecting Rabin impossible. It said the failings were organisational: it mentioned a number of times the unwillingness of all the security services to direct efforts towards detecting and stopping a Jewish assassin.

The commission was not mandated to deal with the build-up of violent opposition to Rabin's policy of partial withdrawal from the West Bank. Its definition of a conspiracy to assassinate was narrowly defined.

There was no doubt Amir belonged to a circle of militant religious nationalists prepared to use violence to oppose the Oslo Accords. Some members of the group knew of his intentions to kill Rabin. Shlomi Halevi, a student, had told police, though in a convoluted form, of Amir's intention to commit murder, claiming he had overheard it in a lavatory in a Tel Aviv bus station. In reality, he had been told by his girlfriend.

The commission's 214-page report has a 118-page classified annex. Judge Shamgar is very much an establishment figure and the conclusions of the report are for the most part bland.

Mr Gillon stepped down as head of the Shin Bet in January, though he said yesterday that he offered his resignation three days after the assassination. The head of VIP protection has also resigned. Other Shin Bet officials responsible for protecting Rabin were censured in the report.



Exercising restraint: An Israeli soldier releasing a handcuffed Palestinian after yesterday's swoop on the university town of Bir Zeit. Photograph: AP

Hundreds held in crackdown on Palestinian students

Jerusalem — Israeli forces yesterday arrested 200 students at Bir Zeit university, 10 per cent of the student body of the most prestigious Palestinian educational institution in the occupied territories, writes Patrick Cockburn.

The arrests started at 4am yesterday when large contingents of Israeli security forces moved into the hill-top town of Bir Zeit, north of Jerusalem, and two nearby villages. Loudspeakers announced that the town was under curfew as teams of soldiers entered student houses and apartment buildings.

Students and others detained were held in a playing field in the nearby village of Jifna. Israeli radio said that 370 Palestinians had been detained. The army said that the aim was

to arrest suspected guerrillas, confiscate weapons and "round up and return home" Palestinians who were staying in these areas illegally. This refers to students from Gaza attending Bir Zeit, though the university says only half the students detained come from there.

The mass round-up will further alienate Palestinians on the West Bank who feel that the limited gains they made through the Oslo accords are being steadily eroded. In addition to the clamp-down by Israel, the Palestinian Authority has arrested at least 700 suspected members of Hamas or Islamic Jihad according to Amnesty International.

In the wake of the four suicide bombings which killed 62 people in Israel, Israeli security forces have moved back into the 465 villages from which they had largely departed.

The blowing up of the houses of the families of those alleged to be involved in suicide bombing and other high profile gestures appear to be aimed at impressing the Israeli electorate with the government's tough stance on security in the lead up to the election on 29 May.

Priests and a judge in child-sex scandal

ELIZABETH NASH
Madrid

Three priests, a marquis, a university professor, a policeman, a juvenile court judge and a retired flamenco dancer. This collection, together with 50 other people, have one thing in common: embroilment in a scandal involving a homosexual child prostitution ring in the southern Spanish city of Seville. Two men, a comedian and a singer, were

bailed for 2m pesetas (£10,000) this week on suspicion of corrupting minors in the case. After months of investigating the goings on at the Army gay bar, in Seville, Judge Maria Amador Echavarrri recently lifted the ban on reporting that she had formerly imposed.

But she withheld the names of the witnesses, more than 20 boys some as young as 14, for their protection. They are identified only by number. The scandal emerged when a young victim who did not receive promised payment tipped off the authorities more than a year ago that under-age boys were subjected to sexual abuse by prosperous dignitaries who frequented the Army bar. One

of the witnesses — known by the pseudonym "Eduardo" — said in a radio interview in January that he had been offered clothes, money, drinks, travel and cocaine in exchange for sexual favours.

The decision to conceal the identity of the accusers was denounced by defence lawyers as recalling the worst traditions of the Inquisition. They learnt details of the accusations only by wading through 16 fat volumes of anonymous testimony, a labour that the Justice Ministry eased somewhat at the weekend by

renting for them an industrial photocopier. The chief evidence against the singer Javier Guruchaga was his apparent request by telephone from a Seville hotel to the Army for a "morito" (an Arab boy) to be sent to him. The police had tapped his call. Others, including the comedian Jorge Cadaval, are implicated on the evidence of young victims and in some cases photographs taken in the Army by policemen posing as potential clients.

Judge Manuel Rico Lara, who presided over Seville's juvenile court, was suspended from his functions and bailed for 1m pesetas in January after one boy testified to having had a sexual relationship with him. The judge declared his innocence and claimed he had been a victim of mistaken identity.

The Army was closed last October and its owner, Carlos Saldana, jailed on charges of promoting under-age prostitution. One of the establishment's highlights was Friday-night bingo with a naked boy in a private cubicle as the top prize. The youths were mostly Spaniards but included some from elsewhere in Europe and Morocco.

Farewell in space
Cape Canaveral — Stormy weather moving into Florida forced NASA to call the shuttle Atlantis to land tomorrow, a day early. The decision was announced a few hours after the crews of the shuttle and the Russian space station Mir said goodbye in a brief but emotional ceremony.

'Godfather' dies
Tokyo — Shin Kanemaru, who wielded immense power as Japan's political godfather for four decades until he was ousted by a huge corruption scandal, died yesterday of a stroke at the age of 81.

Obituary page 22



Rabin: Video showed how easy it was for his killer

nothing to impress this on his subordinates or the prime minister's bodyguards.

The commission had a narrow brief in investigating the immediate security breakdown on 4 November, when Rabin was shot three times in the back as he left a "Yes to Peace. No to Violence" rally in Tel Aviv. Israelis were astonished last year to see on an amateur video that Amir was able to dawdle for 40 minutes as he waited for his victim without anybody asking what he was doing. There were only two bodyguards with Rabin as he was shot, neither standing directly behind him.

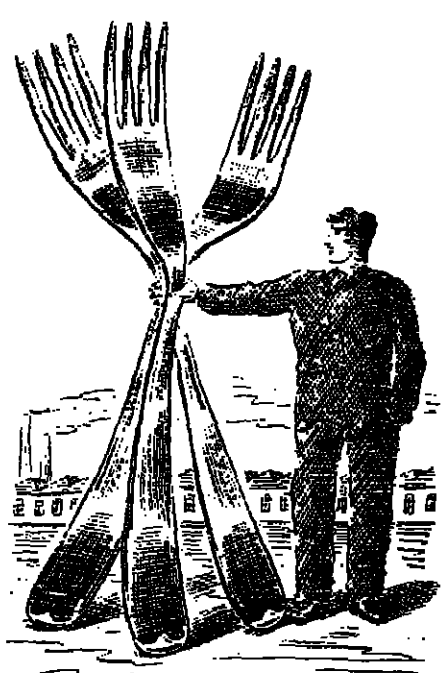
The report said: "The Shin Bet had abundant information about the intensification of threats against the lives of prominent persons, first and

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Town vs Country

A rampant urban moralism has been unleashed upon the countryside. Those working the land see townies lost in a haze of hypocrisy and ignorance. The BSE scare springs from the estranged relationship of modern farmers and consumers

The wet-eyed young farmer who told a television crew there would soon be more people dead by suicide on farms than by Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease was repeating a warning that is being echoed across the countryside. Mad cow disease is not only a health question, nor simply a politics question. It is a question of town and country. It has provoked the biggest crisis for generations in relations between farming, or country people, and the cities where most of us live. And this has been a long time brewing.

In the city, for the consumer, there are always options. In the country, for struggling medium-sized farmers, there aren't. There, the force of urban consumer choice, far beyond the power of politicians, will wipe out rural businesses, hopes, companies – and yes, probably some lives, too. Once this plague has passed, a whole culture of agricultural know-how will have passed away. And what must hurt more than anything is that the disappearance of those farmers will cause barely a ripple of disquiet among the ruminant urbanites.

There has been a terrible reversal in farmers' reputations. Not so long ago, they were respected national heroes, whose sweat and knowledge helped the country survive war and eat ever better in peacetime. Townies might not know much about farming, but they knew farmers mattered. Only a few generations ago, most factory workers, clerks and professional people would have had some dim memory that their people had come from some working village, shire or farm. In millions of Victorian and early 20th-century workers' homes, prints of farmyards and cottages kept the memory of a rural past alive.

Quite recently, there has been a dramatic change in attitude. A rampant urban moralism has increasingly painted farmers as big-business villains – cruel, greedy, insensitive, polluting. When protesters against the live export of lambs or veal calves blockade Shoreham, urban morality speaks. When hunt saboteurs pack into minivans and head for the shires, urban morality is outraged. When suspicious consumers challenge store managers about pesticides in fruit, when suburban ramblers find old hedges have been grubbed up, or twitchers fail to hear expected birdsong – then, and in scores of other examples, urban Britain stares bleakly at rural Britain, and finds it wanting.

From the other end of the telescope, the minority still working the land stares back at the cities and suburbs and sees a haze of hypocrisy and ignorance. They see consumers wanting cheap, interesting and varied food, without being ready to spend much time or money on it. Yet the majority who prefers life that way descends into

moral spasms whenever they glimpse the consequences of their impossible demands. Then thinking farmers hear lectures from "animal lovers" who have never sat up at night with a sick calf. Now they must listen to a great roar of approval for the destruction of their livelihoods.

We have been walking towards this disaster for a long time. As the first industrial country, Britain has been losing any connection with growing food for hundreds of years. From the 18th century onwards there occurred one of the great changes in mankind's history. It was simply but well described by the historian Harold Perkin as "a revolution in human productivity, in the capacity of men to wring a living from nature". This, Perkin said, "enabled a minority of a much larger population to grow the food for all the rest, releasing the majority for other kinds of work, including modern industry, mechanised transport, large-scale government, mass warfare and the professions. It created the modern city."

Our contemporary world, with its liberating technologies, its huge human population, its myriad consumer choice, its cyberspace and post-modern irony, rests on something most of us no longer think about. The countryside is a place few people live in and fewer understand. The pressure on agriculture to make less earth produce more food becomes ever more relentless.

There is nothing new about urban squeamishness and willing ignorance when it comes to food. Vegetarianism and a concern for animal welfare have been well-recorded, if minor, interests, for hundreds of years. In the early 1700s the Duke of Montagu, who loved lambs but said that "when by chance he saw 'em killing one, he turned his head away and could not bear to look," is the hypocritical ancestor of modern man.

This disconnection between beast and plate, field and food, has grown more dangerous with the rise of factory processing and industrial techniques. Anonymous, highly flavoured, brightly packaged gunk – sweetened breakfast gunk, crispy-dyed snack gunk, breaded microwave TV gunk, even gourmet gunk – is producing an extraordinarily ignorant generation. A survey for the Countryside Campaign, launched last November, discovered that one in five children aged seven to 10 believed eggs were laid by pigs and bacon came from chicken. A third didn't know that oats, barley and peas were grown in Britain. One in 10 thought there were lions, tigers and kangaroos at large in the British countryside.

Urban adults are, no doubt, less ignorant. We are pretty glib, even so. We are stupid enough to think that brown-shelled eggs are more "natural"; and when egg producers put colouring in chicken food to



The rural dream: industrial workers kept alive the memories of their past with idealised prints. Hufton Deutsch

ensure that we get brown-shelled eggs very few of us stop and ask what suddenly happened to all the white-shelled eggs.

We think, or pretend to think, that cows live in fields and that "free-range" chickens spend their lives pecking at corn in cobble-farmyards, rather than in factory-style sheds. And so on. This thoughtlessness about how food happens can lead politicians, like the rest of us, into hilarious insanity, as when Teresa Gorman reminded

the Commons, in tremulous tones, that the salmonella scare had caused the death of a million chickens. What, I wonder, did she think was meant to happen to them? That they were going to end their days in Bournemouth retirement homes watching daytime television?

Squeamish ignorance about food is dangerous partly because it leads to events like the current beef and brain disease affair. We swing from long periods of complacency to explosions of hysteria. But it is

directly dangerous, too. Had consumers and the media been more interested in food production and more knowledgeable, would farmers have experimented with feeding cows on the mashed remains of sheep? Would the Ministry of Agriculture have been so relaxed about the widespread use of organo-phosphates? Would there have been more caution about the effect of plastic packaging on meat?

Farmers must take responsibility for what has happened on their farms. The hysteria they are suffering from is partly the result of the consumer ignorance from which many of them have profited in the past. But the urban consumer cannot turn round and bleat, "no one ever told me" about what happens in abattoirs, food processing plants and egg farms. The information, to be sure, is partly hidden by the bland wall of food company propaganda that splashes words like "natural" alongside images of Tuscan peasants, Swiss pastures and half-timbered English barns. But it is not secret. It takes a moment's thought to make one wonder at the relatively low price and abundance in the supermarket. And after wondering what has been done to achieve this – a fourfold increase in agricultural production since 1945 – it is not hard to come by the truth.

We are free people and with freedom comes the duty to be informed and to think. Our ignorance of our countryside is, for the most part, willing. We are ready to think of it via vague, reassuring images, from Postman Pat to Constable, as a place of tranquillity and unchanging values rather than as a heavily mechanised terrain whose inhabitants worry about market share, unemployment and return on capital.

Wendell Berry, the American farmer and writer, has reflected that what he calls the "industrial eater" has lost sense of the culture and origins of food, and that this is highly convenient for the food industry. "The products of nature and agriculture have been made, to all appearances, the products of industry. Both eaten and eaten are in exile from biological reality. It would not do for the consumer to know that the hamburger she is eating came from a steer who spent much of his life standing deep in his own excrement in a feedlot, helping to pollute the local streams."

Well, we know now. And we also know that what seems convenient for the food industry may turn out, to be disastrous not just for some passive consumers, but for the farmer, the farm-worker, the abattoir owner, the local butler, the cheesemaker and the village shop – in short, for the countryside itself.

There are political answers, an assault on the Common Agricultural Policy, which encourages intensive volume farming at the expense of smaller-scale farms; positive encouragement for organic farming; perhaps a labelling and grading system designed to promote high-quality British food.

But the real power for reform lies with us, the consumers, not only free but hugely powerful and in historical terms, wealthy too. Modern prosperity is encouraging a demand for locally butchered meat, organic vegetables and specialty cheeses. It may be objected that this is an elite, middle-class development, but many reforms in taste and culture start there. We have enough quantity, indeed, too much quantity. We need quality instead. We need to become a country that grows less, better. This is a lesson that applies to more about modern Britain than its agriculture. But our agricultural economy, which has come close to disaster in recent days, is where the quality revolution must start.

DIARY

Beef, belief and kangaroo nibbles

In all the secular coverage of the BSE scare, it has been left to the humble *Baptist Times* to come up with a spiritual angle. Under a bold headline, "Beef and Belief", its editorial ponders the problem with proper Christian modesty. "There is little that a newspaper such as ours can add to the debate," it begins. Undaunted, it goes on and asks: "Is there a distinctively Christian contribution which can be made?"

There is indeed. "Abstaining from beef is one way Christians might wish to consider the traditional pre-Easter Lenten period of abstinence." Just tell all the angry farmers that you're very sorry, but you can't be blamed – religion strictly forbids that beefburger.

Just one minor drawback, though. Aren't you meant to give up something you'd actually like to eat?

And what to eat instead? There I can be of some assistance. The answer came at a reception at Australia House for costumes from the Australian ballet this week. Guests were nervily fidgeting the nibbles. Is it beef, they whispered? No, replied the cultural attaché, proudly. It's kangaroo. It was. And we all forgot childhoods curled up with AA Milne and munched merrily.



'Our Tune' fades out

An era ends. An era of toe-curling, cringe-making, gunge perhaps. But an era nevertheless. Simon Bates' "Our Tune", the mid-morning, how-we-met memory which moved from Radio 1 to Talk Radio. Sadly for toe-curlers, yesterday Bates and Talk Radio parted company, with a spokeswoman being none too diplo-

matic about "Our Tune" or its creator. She claimed it prompted 8 per cent of people to reach for the off button. "The public hated it," she said. "We had people ringing to complain every time we played a record, saying 'You are supposed to be a talk station.' Bates' cosy style and half-hour interviews were not what was needed, she added.

Material there surely for one final "Our Tune". One can imagine the scene at the Talk Radio studios. Simon and spokeswoman glance at each other slyly; a furtive smile plays across his spectacles mist up. "You're a turn-off," she whispers seductively in his ear. And so especially for you, Simon, from central London, The Beatles and "Hello Goodbye".



Could Babe pig out with a Flufta?

It has not been a good week for Babe, Australia's unlikely screen star. First, pork sales began to soar alarmingly, as the British abandoned beef and turned to bacon. Then came crushing defeat at the Oscars. Emma Thompson may have been quaffing champagne, but Babe was left with pigswill (although his special effects team won Oscars, above).

Hope, however, is at hand. Lloyds Bank, sponsor of the forthcoming *Battle*, has come up with a new award: the Flufta, dedicated to the public's favourite acting animal. And, I'm told, Babe is tipped for the title. Competition for this prestigious accolade is stiff. Free Willy, the Andrex Pappy and Well Aged, the *EastEnders* dog, are all in the running, and the ceremony will be hosted by Canevara, the Lloyds Bank black horse. In the finest British tradition of sentimental endorsement, my excited source tells me: "Babe will have to keep his teeth crossed a little longer yet."

Your share of protest

Tony Blair will be pleased to see his vision of the stakeholder society has been seized on by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade. The organisation is urging its supporters to attend the annual meeting of British Aerospace on 1 May to protest against its sale of Hawk Fighter planes to Indonesia. To encourage a good turnout, the campaign is advertising free BAE shares in its latest newsletter.

Vive la pay-off

They say these things better in France. Christine Ockrent (right), the most

important woman in the French media, resigned this week as director and editor-in-chief of *L'Express*, France's highest circulation weekly magazine, following *les différences* with the magazine's new owners. Ms Ockrent, who runs her own production company and hosts a political TV show, said in her farewell letter

to staff that she was leaving "with head held high and a generous heart".

It was a fine French flourish. How many media moguls over here even possess generous hearts, let alone publicise them?

Mind you, Ms Ockrent can afford to have a generous heart. According to colleagues, she left *L'Express* with a pay-off which, like her head, was high.



Any objections?

A misprint that Leeds West Conservative Association certainly didn't intend in the list of motions for the Conservative Central Council meeting at Harrogate this weekend. The case of the deportation of the Santi dissident is, it boasts, "an abject lesson" to those who come to Britain to abuse our hospitality. Hard to know how to vote, really.

Mad cow jokes: No 1

I see BSE jokes are beginning to surface.

The first has two cows in a field. One says to the other: "Worrying, all this mad cow disease talk, isn't it?" "Doesn't bother me," comes the reply. "I'm a horse."

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Tories select a loser

The Conservatives are dangerously close to the edge of a gaping hole. It's called a return to the Eleven-plus and it could swallow them. Encouraged by the short-term success they enjoyed exploiting Harriet Harman's decision to send one of her sons to a selective school, they have decided that selection is an issue they can exploit. If they do so, by proposing the widespread reintroduction of selection for secondary schools it will be as political misadventure as it is educationally flawed and socially regressive.

Britain needs reforms which will break down the class ridden nature of its education system, not reinforce those divisions by taking us back to the Fifties.

Education yesterday provided the reluctant backdrop for another pre-election political skirmish. Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, promised a white paper to expand academic selection in grammar schools. Earlier her Labour counterpart David Blunkett had launched a plan for Individual Learning Accounts. Underpinning their statements lie two quite different responses to concerns about the quality of education. Yesterday's announcements will set the pattern for many a clash to come.

The Prime Minister's policy unit appears to have persuaded Mr Shephard to go along with its dream of recreating grammar schools. The White Paper will canvass the possibility of allowing schools to select their intake. It would be a grave mistake.

Setting children for subjects is a great improvement on mixed ability teaching. Institutionalising segregation into separate ability schools is a mistake. Borderline children cannot switch easily between ability groups, and less academic children would be quickly stigmatised. Academic segregation goes against the grain of other advance in the government's education policy — including this week's

Dearing report, which tried to encourage a more open and respectful attitude towards vocational skills. Mr Major will find that evoking grammar schools is a political error as well. Schools are not interested. Only one per cent of the grant maintained schools and education bodies consulted on increasing selection responded with any enthusiasm.

Parents know that education is increasingly the best. If not the only, insurance policy against unemployment and insecurity. They also know that expanding selection will only help those with the brightest. Everyone else will be even more worried than before that their children will be written off.

By advocating grammar schools Mr Major is attempting to soothe parental dissatisfaction with atavism. The educational standards and discipline of a mythical golden past are invoked as a solution to the anxieties about change and insecurity in the present. Few will find this convincing. Parents who are concerned about the next generation will be looking for new ideas to help equip them for the future, not old promises about a return to the past.

This is where Messrs Blunkett and Blair step in. Their proposals are aimed at providing remedies for very modern problems. Targeted first at the unskilled their Individual Learning Accounts would incorporate government, individual and employer contributions to help people take control of their careers by acquiring new skills. Of course Labour hasn't found the answer to the skills deficit in Britain, just as they have not yet found a way to combine diversity and choice within the comprehensive system. But they are at least taking the right kind of approach: one that is inclusive but leaves ample room for choice and individual initiative. Those should be the watchwords of a modern education and training policy.

Eastern fantasies

"It was a cock-up, pure and simple." It was the Palace spokesman's explanation for the Queen forgetting to mention the fate of Polish Jews in her speech to the Warsaw parliament. The same could be said of the whole of her gaffe-stricken visit to eastern Europe this week.

But then the visit is itself symbolic of the patchy, uncertain and ambiguous character of British engagement with eastern Europe since 1989. Lots of stirring rhetoric, lots of history, some advice, not much action. Margaret Thatcher briefly provided an ideological link with the aspirant monetarist reformers of the region. But that was never going to be enough to sustain a fully-fledged relationship. Yet since her departure Britain's relations in the region seem to have become directionless.

The Queen's trip sits squarely within that amateurish tradition. A gaggle of management consultants making claims about the British formulae for privatisation or (incredibly) how to organise local government are no substitute for investment and trade. Hackneyed references to a sense of guilt about the way our leaders behaved in the Thirties and the Second World War (but no visit to Auschwitz) put Britain firmly in these countries' past not their future.

Britain has real interests here. We want Poland and the Czech and Slovak republics and Rumania to move west, in terms of outlook, politics and economics. That does not mean premature admission to Nato, or to the European Union. It

should mean a consistent engagement with these countries, underpinned by growing trade and investment.

Yet too few British companies, compared with their German counterparts, have explored the opportunities of eastern markets. In the early days after 1989 many investors got their hands burnt by over-optimistic and ill-judged investments. These days it is much easier to judge where and how to invest with confidence in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Britain's political engagement with eastern Europe seems opportunistic. Many Conservatives seem to imagine that eastern European states can be cynically co-opted into a scheme rapidly to widen the European Union with the aim of scuppering federalism once and for all. It is fantasy. The horse has already bolted. German economic influence in Poland and elsewhere is based on trade, capital flows and joint ventures. The Czechs for one may not like it but their absorption into the Deutschmark zone is a fait accompli; eastern Europe's prosperity depends on the Germans.

Of course, as long as the monarchy lasts, the Queen should fly the flag abroad, though one suspects her heart lies in visits across the Commonwealth. But as far as Europe goes, the Queen's visit this week has just served to underline how out-of-touch and unprofessional Britain's approach is. If Britain is to be the standard bearer of a wider EU, it needs to back that with investment and trade rather than royal rituals.

20,000 leagues under a Melvyn Bragg

I bring you today the first extract from the new sex 'n' shipping novel *Woman Overboard* by Elsie Fairfax, soon to be a major paperback.

Part One: A Stranger Comes To Call.

Polly had now been at sea for 67 days and was beginning to get tired of baked beans. She had also begun to get tired of the endless sunshine of the Pacific Ocean, of the endless hissing of her radio, of endless grappling with sheets and sails, and of the novelty of Melvyn Bragg.

"If only I had brought a book by some other author," she often thought, but she had really had no choice. When you get sponsorship from the Cunibrian Book Authority, you are contractually obliged to take only Melvyn Bragg's novels on board, and nobody else's, and each Melvyn Bragg book on loan has a built-in microchip so that they can monitor your progress by satellite from Carlisle Library and spot immediately if you have skipped a few pages or even thrown one overboard.

But what she missed more than anything else was a man. Not a special man, just... a man. She had been 67 days at sea without seeing a man and she had got tired of Melvyn



MILES KINGSTON

Bragg's photo on the back of his last novel round about day 14.

"Of course," she said out loud in a rather poor Afrikaans accent. "It's also 67 days since I last saw a woman, apart from my own reflection, so why don't I feel bad about being without a woman to talk to? Why do I miss men more?"

One of the few advantages of being alone at sea is that you can talk out loud as much as you want to. You can shout and rant or sing Gershwin or even practise accents that are notoriously hard to imitate, such as South African and Geordie, all without anyone listening or telling you to pipe down.

"What makes it so hard to take," she said, in a wavering Newcastle accent, "is round about sunset, when you want a man to come along and offer you a little aperitif to kick off the evening..."

"Well," said a voice right behind her, "how about a gin and tonic or a small spritzer?"

Polly wheeled round in utter astonishment. There, not 10 feet away, was a large motor yacht which must have stolen up on her unawares, and standing in the stern quite the most handsome man she had ever seen.

"Were you listening to what I was saying just now?" said Polly.

"Couldn't help it," said the man, smiling a big, handsome smile that filled the horizon and her heart.

"Name's Jack Lancegood. Out for a cruise from Hobart way. Now, how's about that drink?"

Polly was just about to reply in the affirmative when there was an interruption. A woman appeared on the deck of the motor yacht holding a gun. She looked at the man. She looked at Polly. She looked pretty mad.

"So, Jack Lancegood, there is another woman, is there?" she said. Then she levelled the gun at the man. "I told you what would happen if I ever caught you at it again!"

"Honest, sweetheart," said Jack. "I just happened to spot this lone mariner passing by and thought it was only polite to offer her a little something."

"Excuses, excuses, excuses!" said the woman. "You always have a good story and I always swallow it. Well, not this time!"

And to Polly's amazement she shot her companion, who fell groaning in the scuppers.

The woman then turned the gun on Polly.

"Look," said Polly. "Don't shoot... I really must be... I have to... there's a Melvyn Bragg novel I've got to..."

To her great surprise and relief the woman lowered the gun and smiled.

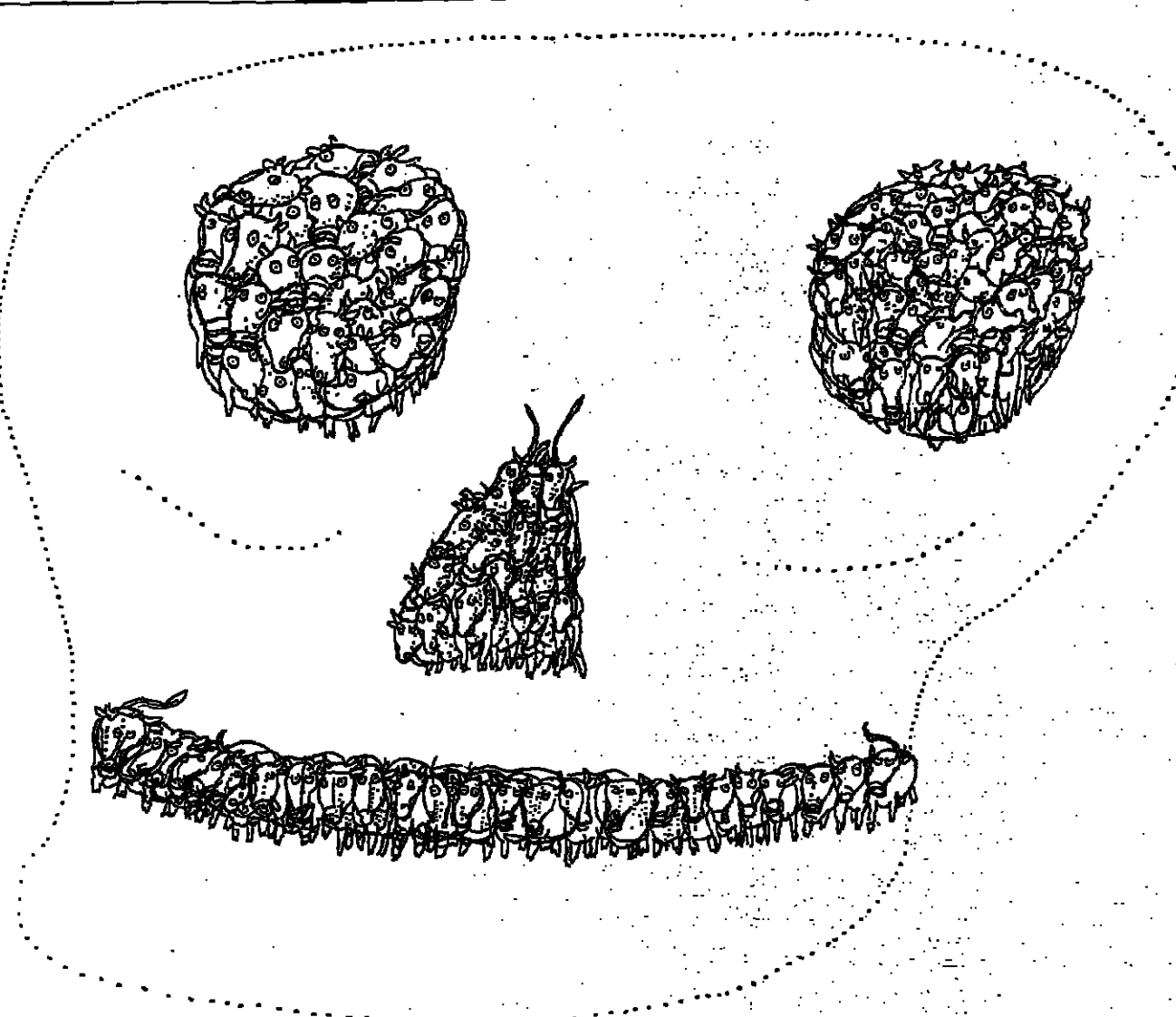
"Men!" she said. "Aren't they the pits?"

"Now let's tip him overboard and get on with that drink he promised you. I'm dying for one myself!"

Coming soon: Is Jack Lancegood really dead? What does this strange woman really want? Will Polly break the rules of the single-handed, round-the-world race if she leaves her own craft to cross to another boat for a quick drink and a passionate lesbian affair?

And what will the folk in Carlisle do when they realise that Polly hasn't turned a page of her current Melvyn Bragg novel in days?

Don't miss the next instalment of *Woman Overboard*!



The last round-up

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dr Carey's commitment to proclaiming the Gospel

Sir: Andrew Brown's assertion that the Churches' Decade of Evangelism has fizzled out ("Could he be the auntie-pope?", 27 March) is at odds with the report on the Decade ("Churches halt exodus", 6 January).

That story pointed to a halt in the decline of attendance: a more user-friendly church, which is planting new congregations every week; whole congregations being involved in evangelism; and more people being trained in new ways of communicating the faith.

It also reported that targets had been identified for the second half of the decade. More needed to be done to reach out to children and young people and more effort had to be placed on deepening the Church's spiritual life.

Far from fizzling out, the

Decade of Evangelism is alive and well in parishes throughout the country. In Dr Carey we have an Archbishop of Canterbury who is a courageous leader, warm and approachable, with a deep spiritual commitment to proclaiming the Gospel.

(NIGEL WAKEFIELD, The Rt Rev Nigel McCulloch, Bishop of Wakefield) Wakefield, West Yorkshire

Sir: Andrew Brown, has made basic mistakes about the spread of Anglicanism and the role of the Archbishop.

Travelling in the bush country of Sudan, thousands of Anglicans lined the way to catch a glimpse of a leader who, for them, represented a global family. Archbishop Carey, much to the delight of Anglicans around the world, represents "us" — the extended, caring interdependent Anglican world.

As one who has the privilege to work and travel with the Archbishop in Anglican Communion affairs, let me assure you that we have in this Archbishop a person who has a prophetic voice and a compassionate heart.

Canon JOHN I PETERSON, Secretary General, The Anglican Communion, London SE1

Sir: Andrew Brown expects disestablishment of the Church of England to come soon as part of constitutional reform. Only the Liberal Democrats are promising disestablishment. Are they seriously expected to win next time?

PETER BOTTOMLEY MP (Eltham, Con) House of Commons, London SW1

Sir: John Gillott (letter, 28 March), berates Ulrich Beck for talking about the "mistakes and shifting stages of scientific knowledge". Mr Gillott seems to think that there is a single rational approach to scientific issues which will lead us to social progress. Science works in terms of probability, not certainty. The knowledge it gives is essentially provisional.

A glance at last summer's issues of *Nature* or *New Scientist* shows scientists adopting a range of positions over the proposed sinking of Brent Spar. Within the past ten days we have seen some scientific experts in the BSE-CJD field tell us that they have stopped eating beef, others that they are even prepared to let their children eat it.

The widespread misunderstanding that science gives certainty is dangerous because it opens us to the misuse of science as rhetorical tool. This was done by ministers when for the best part

of a decade they invoked science as proof of their assertion that British beef was completely safe.

DAVID PACKHAM, School of Materials Science, University of Bath

Sir: Several of your correspondents claim that science cannot tell us about morality, art, love, or the essence of humanity. This is not a self-evident fact but an outdated ideological dogma.

Altruism, social cohesion, pleasure, ritual display, emotion, spirituality, and all the rest are dispositions of the brain, mediated by body chemicals, built up by genes, and sieved by evolution. All these may be amenable to experiment, demonstrable by mathematical modelling, and traceable through archaeology and anthropology. The only limits to science are those imposed by our ancient enemies, ignorance and fear.

NICHOLAS WIDDOWS, London NW3

Sir: I commend your suggestion (leading article, 27 March) for the proposed rehabilitation of public parks.

Would this not be the ideal way of spreading Lottery money more equally throughout the country to mark the millennium? Each park helped by such a scheme would require a ring fence as well as adequate patrols. If people living in the immediate vicinity could be encouraged to join management committees, so much the better.

ALAN R YOUNG, Dudley, West Midlands

Sir: Your picture, story on Afghanistan (23 March) highlights a huge humanitarian catastrophe, caused by over 15 years of civil war.

The main problems facing displaced people are lack of fuel and food. The International Red Cross has been distributing food to 9,000 of Kabul's most vulnerable families with the Afghan Red Crescent. A food-for-work project is also operating in a 35,000-hectare area of what used to be a minefield. Displaced people have made tools and ploughed and sown the land. The first harvest will be in May. The Red Cross is running two main surgical hospitals in Kabul, and fully supports four more with medical supplies.

JOHN ENGLISH, British Red Cross, London SW1

Sir: Dr H C Grant (letter, 27 March) states that only people of a rare genotype are susceptible to CJD. Would it not be possible to carry out a mass genetic screening of the population, so that those of this genotype could take precautions, rather than indulge in mass panic?

RICHARD M PREVETT, London W1

Sir: Yes, buy organic beef if you must — but nobody has to eat beef at all. In all my 84 years I have never eaten beef or any other meat, poultry or fish, and I'm considered pretty fit for my age. Let it be said at once, loudly and clearly: slaughtering animals for food is a dreadful way to make a living.

MAURICE WALSH, Berkshire, Hertfordshire

Cannibalism, cookery and kuru victims

Sir: Dr Richard Ladle (letter, 26 March) is right to point out similarities between BSE-CJD and kuru, the transmissible brain disease discovered in Papua New Guinea in 1957 which is associated with cannibalism. However, kuru was probably transmitted by a combination of contact with infectious brain tissue and poor hygiene, rather than by eating infected flesh.

In his Nobel Prize-winning lecture, published in full in *Science* (1977) vol 197, p943, D Carleton Gajdusek showed that kuru was much more prevalent among women than men, that while women participated in the butchery of the corpses they rarely if ever did so, but both sexes ate the flesh after cooking it. Gajdusek noted that women contaminated themselves, their infants and toddlers with heavily infected brain tissue when the skull of a dead victim was opened and, pointing out that they "rarely if ever washed", suggested that infection "was not probably through the cuts and abrasions of the skin, or from nose picking, eye rubbing, or mucosal injury".

If non-oral routes are indeed the principal ones for the transmission of encephalopathies, then one might expect to find the following:

1. Humans would probably not contract anything from eating scrapie-infected meat. For sheep at least, the experience of the last 200 years would seem to support this view.

2. Humans who handle "volatile" scrapie-infected material, such as dry, rendered bone meal made from contaminated sources, could well become infected by inhaling dust. Could this explain CJD in dairy farmers?

3. Humans who handle less dusty material, such as infected nervous tissue in abattoirs, and who practise sensible hygiene, should be less at risk.

4. Beef from herds which have never been exposed to contaminated meat should not contract BSE, which is true for organic farms.

5. Cows fed on infected bone meal would become infected through the nose rather than the mouth. When cows eat meat they push their entire muzzle well into the food.

Research needs to establish the normal transmission route of these agents before we conclude that eating of, as opposed to non-oral contamination with, infected material is responsible for encephalopathies in humans.

Dr J S KNOWLAND, Department of Biochemistry, University of Oxford

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JOHN ENGLISH, British Red Cross, London SW1

Jobless Germany can learn from us

Europe's recession-hit giant must ask whether it can afford to preserve costly industrial harmony

There are beggars in Frankfurt. As an antidote to the endless gloom about the state of the UK – the Jack-in-the-box economy, the sense of insecurity, the incompetence of our government – I went to have a look at the financial capital of what most people would still consider Europe's most successful economy.

If Germany's economic might gives it authority in shaping European politics – for example at the Inter-Governmental Conference in Turin today – it gives it even greater influence in shaping European economics. There is a German way of doing things: ordered, regulated, secure, based on consensus, with emphasis on manufacturing excellence. At the other extreme, I suppose, is our way of doing things: entrepreneurial, deregulated, insecure, confrontational, with emphasis on flexible services.

Ten years ago this would have been no contest. Of course consensus was better than confrontation, order better than chaos. Even two or three years ago, while some aspects of the British reforms of the 1980s were being admired and imitated, there was no real feeling of a need to learn. Now the scales between the two visions are more evenly balanced. In the German financial and business community there is a deep concern. Business knows that the German way of doing things has to change, but most of the rest of the country won't accept it. The reason for the need to change is told in one word: unem-

ployment. Germany is back in recession. Frankfurt is superficially as prosperous as ever. But wait: aside from those beggars, the shops are half-full and there are items cut to one-third of their original tag; there are retail sites to let; restaurants are empty; there are streams of taxis waiting for hire. Things may be fine for those in work, but many are clearly finding the going tough.

This shows in the figures. Headline unemployment is now over 11 per cent, against 7.9 per cent in Britain. Even allow for seasonal factors and look only at the former West Germany, and it is still over 9 per cent and rising. West Germany has lost more than a million jobs in the past four years; in Germany's showcase industry, plant and machinery, employment has fallen from 1,250,000 in 1991 to 980,000 last December.

German industry is going through the seemingly endless downsizing which we have learnt to accept here. In one sense this is a sign of its excellence, its ability to reorganise itself when times are tough. At one extreme, the great Daimler-Benz pulled the plug on its loss-making associate, the Dutch aircraft firm Fokker, and made enormous cutbacks at its subsidiary AEG. The restructuring of the chemicals company Hoechst has been just as remarkable because it has been done in less of a crisis atmosphere.

Middle-sized engineering companies, too, have responded to pressure by improving, yet again, their perfor-



HAMISH MCRAE

Unions are part of decision making, they come to the round table

manence. VDMA, the plant and machinery firms' association, explained that its members produce 20,000 different products of which – and this is the remarkable bit – 4,000-5,000 are new each year. They succeed by making custom-built products, designed in close co-operation with the customers. Take the common criticism of German engineers in the past, that they produced products which were over-engineered. Fine, they make them simpler. Just a few days ago there was a story about a piece of heating equipment that used to have 170 parts and is now made with 60.

It is hard to convey this sense of excellence that is so deeply rooted in German mechanical engineering... except perhaps to BMW or Mercedes drivers. Up to now every time the

mark rises, every time wages are pushed up, every time the government imposes some new regulation or tax, somehow the sheer quality of the German engineering industry has enabled it to continue to hold its own. It is the best.

But it is also hard to convey the sense of shock last year, when, after an excellent recovery from the early 1990s recession, German manufacturers suddenly found themselves plunged back into trouble. They had done all the right things in 1993 and 1994, slimmed down, simplified ranges, cut out waste, exports had boomed. Then in February and March last year the mark shot up by 6 per cent and the employers agreed to pay increases of more than 4 per cent. Foreign customers stopped buying. Suddenly the whole of German industry had to cut all over again.

The result is insecurity. All the familiar concerns of the UK are now heard in Germany: the fact that companies get rid of some of the most experienced people first, because they are the most expensive or closest to retirement age; or that young graduates, even engineering ones, cannot get jobs. If there is an obvious parallel there are, however, two key differences from the UK. One is the position of the unions; the other the attitude of the government.

Unlike in the UK, in Germany the unions are still part of the decision-making process. They still come to Helmut Kohl's "round table", prompt-

ing the comment that round tables are a dangerous form of furniture. To a British observer this all feels very 1970s: a much more sophisticated level of debate than the beer and sandwiches at No 10, and of course applied to a vastly more competent economy, but the same search for consensus at whatever ultimate cost.

And government is different. Mr Kohl's ruling coalition has just won a resounding victory in the regional elections. Voters are self-evidently happy. They want an interventionist state. They do not mind high tax rates, or at least they accept them if there are sufficient loopholes. (Taxes are high not only at the top. It is astonishing that, for those who earn between £6,750 and £9,500, every extra mark earned is offset by cuts in social security payments or increases in taxes and social security contributions.)

If voters back your policies there is no political pressure to change. If German industry is as wonderful as ever, government lags far behind.

It is always dangerous to project one country's experience on to another. The German way forward will be completely different from our own, not only because we have a different industrial structure but because we have different attitudes. Yet three people I spoke to volunteered that Germany could learn a lot from British labour market reforms. One of them said British industry was now taken very seriously as a competitor. Times have changed.

Everyone loves a good uniform

Civvy street's flunkies need a lesson from the Navy in how to dress, says Jonathan Glancey

Every girl (and many a boy) loves a sailor. Quite why, I do not know. It could, of course, be the natty, flared trousers. After all, they do have a habit of flapping back into young girls' every few years and fashion will develop seasonal crushes on them. Though that still doesn't explain the boys.

Sailors began wearing flares in 1834 and enjoyed cutting and sewing their own in a number of fetching styles until 1914 when standard issue bell bottoms became the order of the day. Only this week, the first review of Royal Navy dress in 25 years found in favour of bell bottoms. The new-look flares will not be quite as wide as they were in days of yore, but as Commander David Hobbs who conducted the review pointed out, "the slight flare looked just right. So we decided to keep some of the old tradition."

Like other examples of traditional dress, sailors' bell bottoms have, or had, a purpose: they were easy to roll up when Jack Tar had to climb rope rigging. They are also highly distinctive and this, in part, is why the Navy should be patted on the back (nothing more familiar than that, mind you) for retaining a form of dress by which we can spot one of Her Majesty's sailors a league away.

Uniforms – ceremonial uniforms in particular – ought to be distinctive. Such a uniform encourages a sense of belonging in the mind of the wearer and allows the public to distinguish between services, ranks and roles. In today's cities, homogeneous uniforms are proliferating: private traffic wardens, deregulated bus drivers, shopping mall and supermarket security guards, even postmen, all sport a banal American-style mall uniform. It makes them look sloppy, silly and unprofessional: the uniforms they wear bear little or no relation to British tradition nor to the work they do. It is hard to tell them apart.

The right uniform – well designed, distinctive and practical – should be something to be proud of, not because uniforms have a fetishistic value (although they do), but because, at their best, they reflect the value of the skill or job of the wearer.

Today, the British fail to design uniforms or, in many instances, do not like wearing them (even though each social tribe, from Sloane Rangers to Toon Army rankers can be recognised by the "uniform" it wears). The old adage that the Germans lost the Second World

War, but had the best uniforms, holds true: British soldiers, no matter how dutiful or brave, were often made to look foolish, as family albums prove.

Even when decent uniforms have been provided (London bus drivers until the mid-Sixties, engine drivers (until British Rail replaced British Railways), they have often been replaced by designs from couturiers wading out of their depth. The new-look British Rail uniforms of 1964 were much ridiculed by cartoonists, and rightly so. At a stroke, they belittled the dignity of those who wore them.

This made a kind of perverse sense, for just when the role of

The only smart civilian uniforms are those worn in fast-food joints

engine driver was reduced from that of craftsman to machine-tending worker, so his new-age uniform diminished him. The same was true of London bus drivers. In the Thirties, these highly trained knights of the road were (along with top-flight engine drivers) among the best paid workers in Britain. Today's deregulated bus companies pay peanuts to their drivers, a minority of whom hurl busloads of pensioners, tots and shoppers around corners at uncaring speeds. They dress in a guise that reflects their reduced status and, it often appears, skill.

Air stewards ("Hi, I'm Jason, let me know if I can help you") and stewardesses ("any drink or hot beverage at all for you sir?") are also dressed in dowdy building society uniforms that lack the grace and undoubted sex appeal of cabin crews from the era of the Lockheed Constellation and Boeing Stratocruiser.

The only ostensibly smart civilian uniforms we see day to day are those worn in fast-food joints, holiday camps and theme parks. These are not well designed uniforms – far from it – yet they are washed, cleaned, pressed and worn with a hint of pride.

Years ago, civilian uniforms took their cue from the military. Perhaps it is time they did so again. For if bell bottoms help every girl (and many a boy) to love a sailor, think what a stylish uniform could do for the driver of a Number 68 bus.

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Is selection good for the kids?

The Government wants schools to select more pupils. Here, two experts debate the issues



In a class of their own? Girls at a Reading comprehensive that has introduced a grammar stream

Photograph: John Lawrence

Lord Tebbit led us to believe that the Sixties were decadent years, but for those of us just starting our teaching careers they were the most exciting of times. Comprehensive schools were beginning to take root and 11-plus failures like myself who, in the earlier years of our lives, had felt humiliated by the social stigma attached to us, welcomed them with open arms. No longer would future generations of children have to be branded like cattle at a most sensitive time of their development. Selection was out.

Thirty years after the legislation that brought in the comprehensives we are now seeing systematic attempts by Conservative and Labour politicians to undermine their credibility. Harriet Harman will be sending her son to a grammar school miles from her home. David Blunkett asks us to "read his lips" about there being no academic selection under a Labour government while at the same time suggesting that comprehensives have failed.

More sinister is the work of the Tories who hold the levers of power. Step by step they are introducing measures designed to distort the comprehensive ideal and bring back the grammar schools for which so many of them yearn.

The return of grammar schools will reinforce social divisions, says Tony Mooney

Yesterday's speech by Education Secretary Gillian Shephard was yet one more indication of the open dislike that the Tories have for comprehensives. By further increasing the proportion of students that schools will be able to select by ability, she has confirmed my worst fears that we have merely reached another staging post on the road to full selection.

The effect of these measures will be to intensify the dogfight between local comprehensives that has emerged in recent years. These measures will ensure that many of our comprehensives, situated in unattractive, deprived areas of our cities, will rapidly become the secondary moderns of yesterday.

How will the schools, with their new powers of selection, choose their pupils? You can put your mortgage on the fact that most will try to incorporate an interview into their procedures.

Interviews give you a clear indication of the social-class of the parents and headteachers will be falling over themselves to try to offer places to the supportive middle-classes.

It would be terrible shame if the education system was forced into selection. Our comprehensives are not the pits of mixed-ability teaching that right-wing politicians would have you believe. Most have been into "setting" and "banding" by ability for years. Many recognise that for many of our students such arrangements get the best results.

I might be wrong, but I strongly believe that the push for selection once again highlights the social class divisions that exist in our society. The activists in favour of selection secretly believe the bright middle-class youngsters at secondary level ought not to have to tolerate the behaviour of their more roughly hewn peers from working-class homes. An out-of-date theory? If you don't believe me, talk at length to some of the middle-class parents in Islington, where I live, who are about to choose secondary schools for their children.

The writer is headteacher of Rutlish School, London Borough of Merton.

Selection for critics and protagonists alike, is a highly moral matter. As Mrs Thatcher put it to those who claimed in her 1987 election campaign that grant-maintained schools would become selective, "You may think it wrong, but I, I do not think it wrong."

The contenders in moral debate often couch their arguments in terms of a conflict of interests between individual children and the wider schooling population. These positions are almost impossible to reconcile, no matter what education research is deployed to carry the day. Moral certainties are held so hard.

None the less there are practical reasons for selecting pupils by ability. It is difficult to stretch each child to the full, if the pace of teaching is pitched to either end of the ability range or, for that matter, steers the safe middle course. One way round this has been to organise classrooms in ways that allow for individual (or group) work. The lesson has been that superb teaching will triumph. But for the less than superb, a high success rate is physically or intellectually difficult, day in day out. And teachers face the additional challenge today of children who are less accustomed

Mixed-ability classes prevent pupils from reaching their potential, says Sheila Lawlor

than in the past to the unquestioned acceptance of authority. The consequences of family breakdown also feed into the classroom.

But there is one reason above all for selection – and that is the pursuit of academic excellence. The serious issue we must face is to restore the intellectual framework of education, which has seeped away through the cracks of successive reforms as each reforming minister has opened up the relatively fragile institution of the school to the forces of a progressive state, local and central.

Comprehensive schooling on a mass scale became possible only by making the classroom a place where pupils learn how to "do" things rather than learn how to think. The teacher, in the degrading speak of the Eighties, became the facilitator who enabled children to acquire skills. In practice, the distinction was necessary given

the difficulty of imparting knowledge over a wide ability range, and the exams and curriculum followed suit. The intellectual levels to which education in this country – and this country alone – have descended has been partly the consequence of the dogmatic imposition of comprehensive schooling.

Selection is not the only basis for successful teaching. Certainly, it should not be for the state to dictate to schools and parents the kind of teaching they must follow. That choice must be for the school and parents, not the state, central or local. What is needed is a liberal framework where government stands aside for schools and parents to decide.

There are pragmatic reasons for setting, streaming or selecting children on grounds of ability. It may help teachers to teach and stretch their pupils. But there are more important grounds: the future of education in this country, as a matter of intellectual endeavour, makes the further use of selection essential.

The writer is director of Politics, the Forum for Social and Economic Thinking. She was formerly deputy director of the Centre for Policy Studies.

Britain's failure to back an EU plan for parental leave is wrong and out of touch, says Helen Wilkinson

Litmus test of family values

Today, the European Council of Ministers is likely to agree to give all parents a minimum of three months unpaid parental leave. For many countries this is hardly a radical step. Germany already offers up to three years off and Sweden up to 15 months off. Yet Britain, alone among the European Union's 16 members, will not be signing up for the directive. As far as our politicians in Westminster are concerned, parental leave is now off the agenda.

But whatever Britain's attitude to Europe, it is quite clear that debate about parenting is intense in millions of households around the country. What was once just a personal issue is fast becoming a political one as three powerful forces converge to put the issue on the agenda in the UK.

The first force for change is mounting pressure from working mothers and fathers. People are agonising over the stresses and strains of being a modern-day parent as they juggle con-

flicting priorities and embark on endearing battles over who will take time off and who will come home early from work. These "parenting pains" are a clear factor in relationship breakdown: the number of divorces granted to couples with children under five has increased by two-thirds since the mid-Seventies. Few women want to sacrifice their jobs and careers to become permanent full-time mothers. Growing numbers of men want to play a more active role as fathers. Both are increasingly looking to the Government, as well as employers, to give them greater flexibility.

The second factor is an increased awareness that direct parental care is better for children in the early years of their life than other forms of childcare. Even in countries such as Swe-

den, which has a high-quality childcare network, parental leave has become so much part of the culture that there is now almost no use of childcare for children under the age of one.

The third, less visible, force for change is demography – a fifth of women born in the Sixties are predicted to remain childless. Many young women see parenting as an unattractive prospect – costly, hard work and undervalued. In the long run, if many more opt out of parenthood, future generations of workers and taxpayers may well be inadequate to sustain a growing elderly population. Women will need help and encouragement to become mothers.

Fortunately, one of the advantages of being the laggard of Europe is that

we can learn from experience elsewhere. In our extensive Demos survey of 16 countries with parental leave we found that schemes need to earmark a non-transferable period of leave to encourage male take-up. Financial support is also needed, otherwise few can afford to take leave. Perhaps most important of all, the scheme should cater for the self-employed and people in small firms as well as large organisations.

Many of the best schemes from abroad involve substantial costs. For policy-makers there is the difficult question of how these should be shared between taxpayers, employers and parents themselves. But it is already apparent from our study that employers' initial hostility to parental leave often evaporates once schemes

are in place, not least because many find that productivity and employee commitment is improved. Even the burden on public finances turns out to be lower than at first appears, since the jobs created for people filling in for parents on leave reduces unemployment costs and boosts tax revenues.

In the long run, the pressure for more balanced lives, and for a welfare system that is better suited to a world where both men and women work, is mounting inexorably. Britain happily subsidises everything from farming to home ownership. There is a new pressing claim on resources. Parental leave could soon become a litmus test of whether our politicians really are serious about family values, regardless of our absence in Brussels today.

"Parental leave – the price of family values" by Helen Wilkinson and Ivan Briscoe is available from Demos, 9 Bridewell Place, London EC4V 6AP. Tel: 0171 333 4479.

obituaries / gazette

Brigadier Roscoe Harvey

Roscoe Harvey was renowned as the finest armoured leader of the Second World War, and later controlled the discipline of the British Turf for 24 years.

A superlative horseman, steeplechase rider, polo player, pig-sticker and a wonderful man to hounds, Harvey excelled as the complete cavalry commander, and was dubbed the Prince Rupert of modern warfare. Of his three DSOs, won during the Second World War, at least one should have been a VC. The 26-times champion jockey the late Sir Gordon Richards described Harvey as "the greatest man racing has known in my lifetime".

And, in Chiswick retirement, the witest, most generous host, breeding and racing good steeplechaser, in competition with his great friend and exact contemporary the Queen Mother, he will also be remembered as the man who once drove miles down a motorway in the wrong direction and got away with it.

He was born Charles Barnett Harvey in 1900, in Sarawak, and came to England a year later on the death of his father, who, with his friend the white raja Sir Charles Brooke, was with the wealthy Borneo Company. Harvey was riding as soon as he could walk, and foxhunting throughout his youth.

A devout Roman Catholic, he was educated at Downside and Sandhurst, and was an outstanding games player despite an inherited short-sightedness which meant his wearing thick spectacles. Foxhunting, racing, and point-to-pointing, he was commissioned in 1920 into the 10th Royal Hussars, the great love of his life, then stationed at The Curragh.

Once, forced to put up two pounds overweight in an Irish steeplechase, he was likened by a senior officer to Roscoe "Fat" Arbuckle, the obese silent film star, and the name stuck.

After a distinguished spell at the Weedon Cavalry School, he was appointed Regimental Equitation Officer and, although he never had much time for show jumping, for a joke entered a troop horse at the Royal International Horse Show and won his way to the final jump-off for the world's biggest prize, the King George V Gold Cup, at Olympia.

One of the finest amateur riders in Britain, Harvey suffered his worst fall in the National Hunt Chase at Cheltenham when the glass of his broken

spectacles had to be dug out from between his upper eyelids and his skull. Riding in races big and small including the Grand National, he remained too a dedicated soldier.

During two years in Egypt he ran a successful racing stable organising some profitable coups. "The six best years of my life" in India followed. First as an adjutant, and then as a major commanding a squadron, he enjoyed not only the soldiering but played polo up to international standard, and became so good at pig-sticking that he was most unlikely to be defeated in the final of the Blue Riband of that sport, the Kadir Cup.

Back in Britain Harvey was involved in the mechanisation of his squadron, although at the end of the first course he attended his report read: "This officer shows absolutely no aptitude for mechanisation whatsoever." It was not long before he was recognised as an outstanding armoured leader.

With Harvey as second in command, the regiment went to France soon after the start of the Second World War and, although hopelessly under-equipped, had suffered only comparatively light personnel casualties when they were evacuated back to England. Promoted to lieutenant-colonel, Harvey first formed the 23rd Hussars and then, fulfilling his greatest ambition, commanded his own regiment, the 10th Hussars, arriving in the Western Desert at the end of November 1941. Twice in the next six months, although hopelessly out-tanked and out-gunned, Harvey inspired the 10th and the other two members of the gallant 2nd Armoured Brigade by leading from the front with the "cavalry dash" which frequently terrified friend as well as foe.

Although in both battles, at Saunnu and then at Knightsbridge Box, Harvey lost nearly all his tanks, including inevitably his own, Rommel's powerful thrusts were repelled. It is fair to say that at Knightsbridge - where with 30 inferior tanks he found himself engaged in a fierce battle with 160 formidable German Panzers - Harvey halted the German advance for long enough for the British army to retreat behind the Alamein line, thereby saving Egypt and the Mediterranean.

By 6pm on the last day at Knightsbridge the regiment had

fought until they had no shells left or tanks fit to fight. Harvey's own tank was shot from under him and he walked about amidst all the shot and shell saying: "Don't give one yard. Please do not give one yard. Stay where you are and fight." The position was saved and Harvey received an immediate DSO.

Back in Cairo for a refit, he wrote to his friend the Jockey Club steward Sir Humphrey de Trafford, who rushed into White's, brandishing the letter saying: "All is not lost! Here's a senior officer in the Middle East who not only thinks that racing will start again, but also wants to be part of it as a Stipendiary Steward."

Harvey was in the thick of the Battle of Alamein, promoted to brigadier, commanding the 4th Light Armoured Brigade. After fighting his way to Tripoli, where he held a race meeting with Arab ponies, he took over 8th Armoured Brigade and struck up a working partnership with General "Tiny" Freyberg, the New Zealand Division's commander, First World War hero and VC. With the help of the legendary American General Patton they defeated the Afrika Korps in Tunisia, earning Harvey another immediate DSO and two mentions in dispatches.

Brought back to England, Harvey took over 29th Armoured Brigade in 11th Armoured Division and, as the spearhead of the follow-up troops, landed in France on 13 June 1944. After some particularly bloody battles around Caen, the breakthrough was achieved. Harvey's brigade moved from the Normandy beaches to capture Antwerp, whose local paper ran the headline, "The Liberation of Antwerp Under the Command of Brigadier Harvey DSO".

General Sir Cecil ("Monkey") Blacker, then a major, describes the scene: "Once the battle was joined, the first thing we realised was that any failure to push ahead, even in the least situation, would generate an even hairier situation back at brigade headquarters. An important element in a commander is the ability to make his troops feel less inclined to incur his displeasure than to face the enemy. The sight of Roscoe's Sherman tank following close behind with his faded red hat poking out of the turret was a considerable deterrent to any desire to linger. He must have made an enormous, unrivalled contribution to winning the war. His humour and imperiousness should never be allowed to conceal the remarkably tough, determined and inspiring character that lay



Harvey: the Prince Rupert of modern warfare and Stewards' Secretary of the Jockey Club, 1946-70

behind them. He fully deserved his three DSOs.

In October Harvey earned his third DSO for "fine leadership, military skill and offensive spirit which permeated to all ranks", resulting in the capture of 700 determined prisoners and many German casualties in Venrai area. After helping to repel the Germans' final thrust in the Ardennes, re-equipped with new Comet tanks, Harvey set out on the last gallop, pausing only for the revolting, heart-breaking task of liberating Belson.

Afterwards he made a final dash along the autobahn, defeating the Russians by a short head to Lubeck. He said later: "That final gallop was a close-run thing. I remember asking my driver, 'How fast are we going?' he replied 'Over 30, sir, still on the bridge'.

As temporary divisional commander, Harvey was responsible for capturing the traitor William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) who was tried and hanged, and also Heinrich Himmler, who cheated the hangman by committing suicide.

After the war, Roscoe Harvey organised and rode in a series of race meetings before making his way out of the Army

to become Stewards' Secretary to the Jockey Club, in which capacity his own special form of discipline, preventing crime in racing rather than punishing it, was an unusual success. He still hunted regularly and rode many point-to-point winners in his retirement which was marred only by the death of his much-loved son Jeremy, killed in a motorcycle accident after a fall in a point-to-point at which Harvey also fell, breaking his collar-bone.

For a while Harvey was a very knowledgeable member of the British Boxing Board of Control and bred and owned some excellent jumpers. He and the Queen Mother vied with each other to win the Grand Military Gold Cup.

With his great friend the late Col "Babe" Moseley, Roscoe Harvey was driving home one of his splendid sports cars after a cavalry memorial parade in London when Moseley insisted on taking the wrong exit out of the Maidenhead roundabout on the M4, resulting in their rejoining the motorway in the wrong direction.

Harvey said: "We found ourselves in the fast lane and I said 'There's only one thing to do. It may be broad daylight but I

will turn my headlights on and go like hell. So they won't know whether we're cops or robbers.' There weren't many people in the fast lane and we didn't meet anybody for a couple of miles. One man held 'his ground, but we avoided him and luckily hit nothing. When we got to the next exit there was a gap in the crash barrier and we skidded across to get out."

Of course a couple of earnest citizens reported them and, at the subsequent court case, after their solicitor had managed to persuade Babe Moseley not to say "It was my biggest thrill since riding in the National", they got off on the grounds that the roundabout was very badly signposted at the junction.

Roscoe Harvey was very proud, at the age of 95, to take the salute from his wheelchair at the big VJ Day parade in Stow-on-the-Wold. He was a hero to everyone who knew him.

Tim Fitzgeorge-Parker

Charles Barnett ("Roscoe") Harvey, soldier and racing administrator: born 19 July 1900; married 1926 Biddy Mylne (one daughter, and one son deceased; marriage dissolved); 1966 Betty Fraser-Horn (née Stoddard; died 1980); died 28 March 1996.

Simon Nowell-Smith

Each morning Simon Nowell-Smith's first order of business was scanning the daily newspaper obituaries. He would explain that he was checking to be sure he hadn't died without knowing it. That such a confusion might arise is not surprising, for if he had any views on the next world his must have imagined heaven as a place much like earth: a comfortable, hospitable house, filled with superb rare books, a serious cellar, set in a well-tended and abundant garden, and above all presided over by someone quite a lot like himself.

Although he will be remembered as a great bibliophile and bibliographical scholar of the highest order, his career was varied. His longest tenure was with the *Times*, where between 1932 and 1944 he was a member of the editorial staff, including two years as Assistant Editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*; during the Second World War he was a member of the Naval Intelligence Unit.

He was appointed Secretary and Librarian of the London Library in 1950, a post from which he retired in 1956. Later positions included the presidency of the Bibliographical Society (1962-64); the Lyell Readership in Bibliography at Oxford (1965-66); and trusteeship of Dove Cottage (1974-82).

His lasting avocation, however, was rare books: the focus of his collection shifted over the years, and he would as readily sell ranks upon ranks of his treasures as buy them if a new interest took hold. In the late 1970s, for example, he aimed to acquire first editions of the early volumes of most English poets from the Romantics to the present. In those days he would be equally gleeful in the possession of *Howells' Rhymes* by William Barnes, the Dorset dialect poet; Erasmus Darwin's *Lives of the Poets* in pompous morocco-bound quarto; and Eliot's signed dedication to Virginia and Leonard Woolf who had printed his *Poems* (1919) and bound it in rancous homemade Bloomsbury wallpaper at the Hogarth Press.

The emphasis became rather more grand after 1983, the year he was asked to exhibit a selection of his books at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. On this occasion he decided to offer his very best and most costly inscribed volumes, under the punning title "Wordsworth to Robert Graves and Beyond". This sepulchral wit was confined to the catalogue, however; the collection itself was at this time inspired with new life and immediately began to recreate itself.

In the years following the Bodleian exhibition, during which he had been buying and selling vigorously, visitors to his house were taken aback not only by the uncharacteristically huge gaps in the once-thronged shelves, but also by a bare wall where once a giant cabinet bookcase had stood, now summarily dismissed from service. Nowell-Smith had been getting rid of many minor items in order to buy into his new enthusiasm, first edition inscribed or association copies of the very best and greatest poets.

The idea of change in any collection was for him the signal fascination. A collection is an infinitely perfectible entity; the work is never quite done; the appetite is always whetted by the prospect of tracking down desiderata and of establishing their strange bibliographical histories, anomalies and absurdities. The focus of his own collection at any time was principally guided by literary taste; he was not a man who would collect what he could not read with delight. But the bonus of the book as an object with interest and qualities in its own right enhanced his pleasure. It was as well for his purse as for his taste that he was able to afford the very best of English literature.

Born in 1909, Simon Nowell-Smith was educated at Sherborne, where his father, Nowell Smith, a former Fellow of Magdalen, Oxford, was headmaster, and at New College, where he read Greats. Although he lived in London for many years, Nowell-Smith never really left Oxford. His principal dwellings were in Swelme in the Fifties

and Sixties, and Headington Quarry from the late Sixties (only in the late Eighties did he move into Headington itself, where he spent his last three years in a nursing home).

After the death of his wife Marion in 1977, he felt his rambling stone house, Quarry Manor, was too much for a single man, and so built himself an elegant bungalow at the bottom of his large garden; the new abode was quickly dubbed "Quarry Minor". From this house, after a prolonged period of bereavement, he began to re-establish both his collection of books and his wide circle of friends. Handsome even in old age, he reverted to an earlier sartorial wit, sporting a selection of unusual ties (his favourite was one made of red fawn), a trilby and a walking stick, he could often be seen in the Bodleian working on his latest bibliographical project, or buying chesses and coffee in the covered market, or taking people to lunch. In 1986 he married Judith Adams, an American art-book dealer resident in England.

He was the author of six books of his own, notably *The Legend of the Master* (1947), *Henry James: Letters to Macmillan* (1967), a history of the publishing house, and *International Copyright Law and the Publisher* (1968), still a standard work on the subject. He kept his literary output very much in the background, and would deprecate past achievements; he was made uneasy by ostentation and was embarrassed by eulogy. An encomiastic account of his bibliographical career by one of his acolytes was subject to intense editing and modification



Nowell-Smith: sepulchral wit Photograph: London Library

before it was reluctantly allowed into the *Book Collector*; he would not permit himself to be compared to the famous men of antiquarian books; the charming portrait photograph of him which hangs alongside other luminaries such as T.S. Eliot in the starwell of the London Library worried and distressed him in the implied comparison.

Appreciation of simple pleasures remained with Simon Nowell-Smith always. He loved parodies, doggerel, limericks, and clerihews (which he composed readily, often in Greek). He grew fruit and vegetables and until late in life made his own bread. He was unfailingly generous to his friends in matters large and small, offering a Chassagne-Montrachet for lunchtime drinking, or lending sums of money to those who seemed to require it. Although he claimed to be a great snob, in fact he loathed pretension of any kind, and to those who did not properly understand his habit of cutting people for his fault seemed merciful.

He looked at the obituaries every day as a sort of recursive joke. He himself wrote plenty of them for the *Times*, but only because "they had the inestimable advantage of being about other people. He would regard all tributes to himself with dismay, including this one.

Claire Preston

Simon Harcourt Nowell-Smith, writer, collector and librarian: born Winchester 5 January 1909; editorial staff, the *Times* 1932-44; Assistant Editor, *Times Literary Supplement* 1937-39; Secretary and Librarian, London Library 1950-56; Secretary, Hospital Library Services Survey 1958-59; President, Bibliographical Society 1962-64; married 1977, two sons, one daughter; 1986 Judith Adams; died Headington, Oxfordshire 28 March 1996.

Shin Kanemaru



Kanemaru: forger of deals Photograph: Camera Press

Hoisting him on his shoulders, Kanemaru carried the Speaker in through the mêlée, fending off parliamentary colleagues with judo moves and, by his own account, breaking his leg in the process.

As a student he was a poor scholar but a fine athlete. Tall and bulky (in later years, his neck disappeared almost completely, giving him his famous bulldog appearance), he was winning judo tournaments in his teens, and after scraping through university in Tokyo he worked briefly as a biology and martial arts teacher before being shipped off to Manchuria in 1937. A bout of pleurisy saved him from the nasier extremes of Japan's war and he returned to Yamashiro to marriage (leavened by a series of mistresses), and stewardship of the family sake business.

He entered politics in 1958, winning the first of 12 elections to his local constituency, and quickly put his robust talents to good use in the service of the LDP. During a bitter struggle over the Japan-US Security Treaty in 1960, the opposition attempted to prevent its ratification by physically blocking the entrance to the Diet chamber.

truculent Socialist opposition. After a rich meal and fine sake, served by elegant hostesses, Kanemaru would play mah-jong with his political adversaries and deliberately lose. Then he would request cooperation in some knotty piece of legislation. "There must be at least 10 top opposition officials," he once boasted, "who would willingly do my bidding with a single phone call."

It was Tanaka who first put Kanemaru in the Cabinet, as Construction Minister from 1974 to 1976. He later served as

head of the National Land Agency, then of the Defence Agency. As Construction Minister, he generously expressed his gratitude to his voters. "To say that I was involved in the construction of 99 per cent of bridges in Yamashiro," he shyly acknowledged, "would not be incorrect." A bridge in the prefecture still bears the name Shin-chan Bashi - "The Boy Shin's Bridge".

Despite his brazen politicking, Kanemaru inspired loyalty as well as respect. But his boldest and most brilliant move was a stunning act of betrayal. In 1985 he brutally broke away from Tanaka, by this time facing bribery charges over the Lockheed scandal, and set up his own political faction with the man who later became Prime Minister, Noboru Takeshita. It was an astonishing act of political parricide, a *coup d'état* which crippled the old man physically as well as politically - three weeks after the formation of the Takeshita faction, Tanaka was paralysed by a stroke.

When another bribery case, the Recruit scandal, toppled a whole generation of LDP leaders, including Takeshita and another former Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, the field was open for Kanemaru. The prime-ministerial became his personal gift; probably accurately he said, "If I myself ever became premier, I would be a major embarrassment to Japan." But he acted like a head of state, visiting America, Chi-

na and North Korea, where he provoked fury by apologising for Japanese aggression during the Second World War. For this act of unofficial diplomacy he narrowly escaped assassination by a right-wing gunman.

His ultimate demise was more predictable, and more appropriate. In 1992, the head of the Sagawa Kyubin trucking company was arrested for political presents worth 40 billion yen (some £250m by today's exchange rates) of 160 yen to the pound). Electoral rules barred political donations of more than 1.5m yen; Kanemaru, it turned out, had received as much as 500m yen. Investigators raided his offices and removed boxes of share certificates and gold ingots. Even before the charges were formally filed, he resigned his party post and soon after his party seat and leadership of the faction.

Almost as shocking as the vastness of the corruption was the leniency of the sentence: Kanemaru was fined just 200,000 yen. At his trial he appeared in a wheelchair, pushed by a young aide. It looked like a bid for sympathy, but Kanemaru's career really was beyond salvation; in his last years he suffered increasingly from diabetes, which contributed to his final stroke yesterday morning.

Richard Lloyd Parry

Shin Kanemaru, politician: born Yamashiro Prefecture, Japan 17 September 1914; twice married (three sons); died Yamashiro 28 March 1996.

In a country generously endowed with political monsters, Shin Kanemaru was, for 20 years, the most colourful, the most powerful, the most ruthless, and the most corrupt figure in Japanese politics.

A backroom string-puller of the old school, he operated in the wings of the public stage and manipulated power through a matchless network of friends, protégés, minions, and stooges. As a senior member of the Liberal Democratic Party, he never rose higher than deputy Prime Minister, but as leader of the LDP's biggest faction, four premiers owed their office to him. George Bush received him at the White House; he also maintained a notorious relationship with Kim Il Sung, the Stalinist dictator of North Korea. He was as comfortable with gangster bosses as with company presidents, and his spectacular fall from grace four years ago demonstrated that between politics, business and organised crime in Japan there is frequently no discernible difference.

Like the late Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, friend, patron and fellow politician, Kanemaru rose to power from a rural power base, far from the bright lights and relative political sophistication of Tokyo. He was born in 1914 in a remote village in the rural prefecture of Yamashiro to a family of brewers. A love of booze remained with him, and his sake-fuelled benders were the source of countless anecdotes.

many of them told by Kanemaru himself.

As a child, he also acquired the habits of power which would later make him so infamous - bullying (his memoirs, *My History*, proudly record his early victories in schoolyard scraps) and disbursement of favours (he won popularity by distributing treats among his classmates). One hagiography records the occasion when young Shin helped one of his classmates overcome an unfortunate bedwetting problem, by tying a rope around his penis.

As a student he was a poor scholar but a fine athlete. Tall and bulky (in later years, his neck disappeared almost completely, giving him his famous bulldog appearance), he was winning judo tournaments in his teens, and after scraping through university in Tokyo he worked briefly as a biology and martial arts teacher before being shipped off to Manchuria in 1937. A bout of pleurisy saved him from the nasier extremes of Japan's war and he returned to Yamashiro to marriage (leavened by a series of mistresses), and stewardship of the family sake business.

He entered politics in 1958, winning the first of 12 elections to his local constituency, and quickly put his robust talents to good use in the service of the LDP. During a bitter struggle over the Japan-US Security Treaty in 1960, the opposition attempted to prevent its ratification by physically blocking the entrance to the Diet chamber.

BIRTHS

ELLIOTT: On 18 March 1960, to Andrew and Beverly, a son, Alexander Michael, a brother to Benjamin.

MEDLICOTT: On 22 March at St Helier Hospital, to Debbie and William, a son, Thomas.

DEATHS

HENRY: Ruth Deborah, on 28 March 1996, late of Darling Point, Sydney, Australia. Wife of Leon (deceased), sister of Nicola Gussman, mother and mother-in-law of Paula and Trevor Shaw, Judith and Jules Black, Alex and Lawrence Gilbert (deceased), grandmother of Alexandra and Anthony, Georgina and Claudia, Nicholas and Duncan, great-grandmother of James and aunt of Jonathan and Paul.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

BAER: Peter, who died on Friday 22 March, will be interred with a brief ceremony at Highgate Cemetery, Swains Lane, No. 50, shortly before 3pm on Tuesday 2 April 1996. Friends welcome.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Memorials) please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

BIRTHDAYS

Sir Roy Beldam, a Lord Justice of Appeal; 71: Mr Henry Bellingham MP; 41: Mr Richard Rodney Bennett, composer; 60: Mr George Chisholm, townhouse; 81: Sir William Dugdale, director and chairman, General Utilities; 74: Miss Julie Goodyear, actress; 51: Miss Margaret Howard, broadcaster; 58: Mr Eric Idle, actor and comedian; 53: Mr Jack Jones, former trade union leader; 83: Sir Arthur Knight, former chairman, Court-audits; 79: Mr Cecil Lewis, writer; 95: Mr John Major MP, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury; 53: Miss Ruby Murray, singer; 61: Mr Hugh Neill, Lord-Lieutenant for South Yorks; 75: Sir John Paul, former Governor-General of the Bahamas; 80: Mr Chapman Pincher,

journalist; 82: Sir John Reed, former chairman, TSB Group; 78: Miss Fiona Reynolds, Director, Council for the Protection of Rural England; 38: Lord Ross, Lord Justice-Clerk; 69: Miss Anne Stoddard, diplomat; 39: Mr John Suttart, television reporter and newscaster; 52: Lord Tabbitt, former government minister; 65: Sir John Vane, pharmacologist; 99: The Right Rev James Weatherhead, Chaplain to the Queen in Scotland; 65.

Anniversaries

Birch Sir Edin Landseer Lunens, architect; 1899: Dora de Houghton Carrington, artist; 1898: Sir William Turner Walton, composer; 1902: Deaths: Georges-Pierre Seurat, painter; 1891: Robert Falcon Scott,

explorer; 1912: Vera Mary Brittain, author; 1970. On this day: the Royal Albert Hall was opened by Queen Victoria; 1871: the last flying bomb fell in England; 1945: Today is the Feast Day of Saints Armogastus, Masculus, Achimundus and Satorus; St Berthold, St Cyril of Hellipolis, St Gaudelus or Woolo, St Gwladys, Saints Jonas, Barachisus and Others, St Mark of Arethusa and St Rupert of Salzburg.

Luncheons

Royal Albert Hall
Mr John Cleland, President, and the Council of the Royal Albert Hall were hosts at a luncheon held yesterday to mark the 125th anniversary of its opening by Queen Victoria.

Dinners

Free Church Federal Council
The Rev John Newton, Past Moderator, the Free Church Federal Council, was host at a dinner held yesterday evening by the Free Church Federal Council in the Connaught Rooms, London WC2, to mark the retirement of the Rev David Staple from the office of General Secretary, Dr John Biggs, Chairman of the Free Church Federal Council, and Canon Martin Reardon, General Secretary of Churches Together in England, spoke.

Amongst those present were: Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mrs Carey, Cardinal Basil Hume, The Rev Janet Workman, President of the National Free Church Women's Council and Mr Worsley, Mr Philip Mawer, Secretary General of the

General Synod of the Church of England, and Mrs Mawer; Mr Paul Marshall, Director of the Council of Churches and Jews and Mrs Mendel; Mr Brian Beck, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, and Mrs Beck; The Rev Eric Brown, General Secretary of the Alliance of Reform Churches; The Rev David Collier, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain; and Mrs Collier; The Rev Tony Burdett and Mrs Burdett, the United Reformed Church.

British Library

The Second Annual Douglas Bryant Lecture, which was to have been held on 2 April, has had to be cancelled due to the withdrawal of the speaker, Dr James Billington. The British Library apologises for the short notice of this change, and regrets any inconvenience caused. For further information, telephone 0171-412 7760.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 6.14pm.

Beth Shalom: 0207-387 4204. Federation of Jewish Communities: 0207-2253. Union of Jewish Communities: 017-538 1423. Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-540 4751. Synagogue of Greater London: 0171-259 1970. New London Synagogue: 0171-259 1970.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief, visits the Royal Logistic Corps Training Centre, the Princess Royal Barracks, Blackdown Camp, Dorset. The Duchess of Kent, Patron, the Royal Military College of Artillery, the Queen's Artillery Detachment at the Royal Naval College, HMS Medway.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment presents the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Statement: Blue Chip
Market report: Late
Strategy view: Thursday

C&W

Employment: Po

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MATHEW HORSMAN

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C&W in £33bn merger talks with BT

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Cable & Wireless last night ended weeks of speculation by confirming that it was in talks with BT that could lead to a £33bn merger of the groups and the telecommunications industry.

The merger would also be by far the biggest ever in the UK, dwarfing last year's £9.3bn marriage of the Glaxo and Wellcome drugs companies.

The company was forced into making a statement after the stock market had closed after a

surge in its own and BT's share price in late afternoon dealings. The shares soared amid intense rumours that previous one-off discussions between the arch-rivals had finally been revived.

C&W said: "The board of Cable & Wireless noted the recent movement in the share price. Cable & Wireless confirms that some exploratory discussions are being held with BT which may or may not lead to a merger of the two companies. A further statement will be made if appropriate although there is no immediate expectation of this."

BT has consistently refused to comment in recent weeks, but City sources say an approach was made to Cable & Wireless at the end of last year after the abrupt departure of both its chairman and chief executive.

Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, is believed to be determined to acquire C&W but it is unlikely that anything could happen without the agreement of C&W and the blessing of the Government. The merger - with appropriate conditions - is unlikely to be resisted by ministers. Any deal between BT and C&W would face formidable

regulatory hurdles in Britain and Hong Kong, where C&W's most valuable asset is based - its 57.5 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom. The merger would also encounter difficulties in Germany, where the two companies have stakes in rival telecommunications groups.

The merger would be the biggest in UK corporate history and would almost certainly involve the sale of Mercury Communications, C&W's UK arm and the main rival to BT. Don Cruickshank, the industry watchdog, said recently that the main issue for him in the event

of any merger and subsequent disposal of Mercury would be the strength and commitment of the new owners.

The plan would also have to include a solution for Mercury One-2-One, C&W's mobile joint venture with US West, which competes with BT's Cellnet. There was speculation yesterday that BT might in some way have off its 60 per cent stake in Cellnet, the balance of which is owned by Securicor.

Shares in C&W climbed 54p during the day to 511.5p, valuing the company at £11.3bn, while BT's rose by 14.5p to

348.5p, a valuation of £21.9bn. The surge spilled over to Wall Street. American Depository Receipts in BT rose by more than \$3 to \$54.25 and C&W by \$3 to \$24.75.

The negotiations at C&W are being conducted by Rod Olsen, acting chief executive and Brian Smith, non-executive chairman. The group has been actively attempting to recruit a new chief executive and an announcement had been expected within days. The talks with BT appear to have inevitably muddied the waters and C&W declined to comment on any

potential management changes. The driver for BT in acquiring C&W are its international activities, in particular the Hong Kong telecom stake and other operations in the Asia Pacific region. Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's new chief executive, has said within recent weeks that Asia Pacific is one region where BT must expand to ensure its future as a leading global player.

Any deal between BT and C&W would face tough regulatory hurdles in Hong Kong. It could also face difficulties in Germany, where the two companies have stakes in rival

telecommunications groups. BT is keen to expand outside the core UK operations which are increasingly squeezed by regulation and competition. The company's prices are at present capped at inflation minus 7.5 percentage points and are being reviewed now by Mr Cruickshank. The watchdog's proposals for new price controls are expected to culminate in a tougher cap to come into effect next year. BT must agree the changes decided by the regulator or the matter will be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Employment: Political uproar as utility lays off thousands of workers, but expansion plans bring some good news for Wales and Ulster

United Utilities ignites jobs row

MARY FAGAN

A political row erupted yesterday following news of 2,500 job losses at United Utilities, the company formed by North West Water's £1.8bn takeover of Norweb, the regional electricity firm. The lay-offs compare with 800 previously projected and will be largely in the core water and electricity operations.

Ian McCartney, shadow employment minister, attacked the planned cuts as "a slap in the face for thousands of hard-working employees". He added: "United Utilities is among the most profitable utilities in the country, and there is absolutely no need for these redundancies. Yet again the taxpayer is to be landed with a huge bill for unemployment benefit as employees are sacrificed to give a quick fix to the balance sheet."

Brian Staples, chief executive,

said: "It's regrettable and we do not like it. But it is a fact of life in the industry today. The best people across both businesses will go forward with the group."

The job cuts in the core businesses emerged alongside plans to dispose of the group's retail, contracting and process equipment divisions, which employ about 4,000 in the UK and elsewhere. United also intends to pull out of power generation, an activity inherited from Norweb, which the new ownership feels is too small to be "meaningful".

United also hinted that it might seek further acquisitions in its drive to be a super-utility. The company said: "Ways are being explored of extending the group's utility activities into Europe whilst at the same time watching with interest the continued rationalisation in Europe."

The group said that the sav-

ings from the Norweb merger would be £140m a year by the end of the decade, about 40 per cent more than had been originally thought.

Earnings enhancement in 1996/97 will also exceed expectations and real dividend growth of 11 per cent per annum is "possible".

United will make a provision of £104m this year, largely to cover severance costs. Gearing at the end of the year will be 90 per cent, rising to 100 per cent next year but quickly falling back to between 75 and 80 per cent. The planned divestments, which the group said could take some time to achieve, could cut a further 10 per cent.

The move was broadly welcomed among City analysts. But some warned that United still faces the uncertainty of price control reviews at the end of the decade by two watchdogs, Ofwat and Ofreg. According to one analyst: "There is not much to get worked up about here except what appears to be a strategic decision to retrench into the core utility operations." The group's shares moved up 14p to 611p.

Separately, Calor Group yesterday warned of redundancies to come, and British Rail's engineering development unit announced job losses.

Calor, Britain's biggest supplier of bottled gas, warned more than 300 workers at its Slough headquarters, close to London, that there would be redundancies following a decision to close the office by next year. The move forms part of a plan to redistribute head office functions between existing regional offices and a new customer management centre to be established this year near Leamington Spa in Warwickshire.

The company refused to give further details ahead of a preliminary results announcement due this morning, but the business is known to be facing difficulties.

British Rail's engineering development unit is to close by the autumn with the loss of 58 jobs. BR had hoped to sell the Derby-based unit, which specialises in development of prototype rail vehicles.

Comment, page 25

Now Norweb pulls out of retailing

NIGEL COPE

The decision by United Utilities to sell Norweb's electrical retail interests makes it the latest in a long list of the privatised utilities to abandon the cut-throat market.

Eight electricity companies have now pulled the plug on their electrical stores in the last 12 months, as pressure to deliver value for shareholders forces tough decisions on peripheral activities. The Rumbelows chain also closed a year ago blaming mounting losses for the decision.

Only a handful of the regional electricity companies, including Seeboard, Northern and Scottish Hydro are still battling on. Only Scottish Power is still expanding aggressively. Most have been making substantial losses and have either sold or closed large parts of their operation.

Norweb's electrical division is unusual in that it was making profits - £20m last year on sales of £207m. It has 90 high street stores and 67 out of town su-

perstores. Most are in the North West though it has 18 superstores in the South West after it's purchase last year of some of Swale's outlets.

The most likely candidate to buy the stores is the company's management led by Peter McTaggart, the group's retail director. He joined Norweb in 1992 and was previously a board director at Comet.

The electrical retail sector is rapidly consolidating into a few major players led by Dixons (which also owns Currys) and Comet, part of the Kingfisher group. A year ago East Midlands Electricity and Yorkshire sold their Homepower joint venture. South West and web Manweb gave up the fight in April. In May the Powerhouse chain, which was jointly owned by Eastern, Midland and Southern, was put on the market.

Following Eastern's takeover by Hanson, some 200 of the outlets were sold to the management, and another 200 were closed.



Black day for employees: Thousands more will be searching for work at JobCentres after yesterday's lay-offs

Bank of England axes offices

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

Three hundred and fifty jobs were lost yesterday in the public services financial sector as the Bank of England and the National Statistics Office announced cost-saving exercises.

The Bank said it was closing four regional note-handling centres at a cost of 150 jobs over the next 12 to 18 months as part of a shake-up of its system for distributing banknotes.

Cash handling will cease at Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Newcastle, and in future the issuing of bank notes and the disposal of old ones will only be handled at the Bank of England branches in London and Leeds. Offices will be maintained in these cities for monitoring economic trends and new ones will be opened in Cardiff and Nottingham, taking the total around the country to 12.

The newly formed Office for

National Statistics said it would shed up to 200 jobs in the coming year as it merges staff at the Central Statistics Office and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Tim Holt, ONS chief executive said he wanted its statistics to be more user-friendly and readily available as well as preserving individual privacy. "I

want official statistics to be more widely available and more widely used, not just by businesses and analysts but by ordinary people," he said.

A Bank of England spokesman said the move was being made because the high street banks had taken on much of the work in distributing banknotes previously. The Bank

said it intended to eliminate costly duplication between its own arrangements for processing, storing and distributing banknotes and those of the commercial banks. This should save around £4m per year, but will be partly offset by the £1m per year costs of the regional agencies.

Alastair Darling, Labour's City spokesman, said it was essential that the Bank of England maintained its economic intelligence units in the English region as well as in Wales, Scotland and northern Ireland.

"We want to broaden the basis on which the Bank of England formulates the advice that it gives to the Chancellor on interest rate policy," he said. "We propose to establish a Monetary Policy Board that will include members from the City and from industry in order to reflect views from different parts of the country."

Yesterday's winners and losers	
Destruction	
United Utilities	1,700
Bank of England	150
Office for National Statistics	200
Calor	n/a
British Rail	58
Creation	
Legal & General	400
Daewoo	330
YG-1	230
*300 warned of redundancies to come	

CableTel buys NTL broadcast network for £235m

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

International CableTel, Britain's third largest cable operator, is paying £235m for NTL, the leading national broadcast services provider, as a step toward creating a truly national telecommunications network.

The move will bring together NTL's national transmission operations and CableTel's local fibre-optic cables, which provide 57,000 homes with cable TV and

telephony. The result will be end-to-end broad-band connections, allowing high-speed links carrying voice, data and video. CableTel will be able to use the NTL transmission network to bypass BT and the other national telecoms operators. NTL recently won a national licence to provide fixed radio telecommunications, which will accelerate CableTel's creation of a national network.

"This creates a unique national telecoms competitor,"

Barry Knapp, chief executive of CableTel, said.

He added that the company intends to make the network available to other cable operators, which have been seeking ways of avoiding the charges made for the use of networks operated by BT, Mercury and Energis.

NTL, which supplies transmission services to ITV, Channel 4 and independent radio stations through a network of 600 masts and microwave links, was sold off by the Government

when it disbanded the old Independent Broadcasting Authority in 1991. An investment group led by a division of Mercury Asset Management bought the operations for £70m.

In addition to £200m in cash, financed through bank loans, CableTel will pay NTL shareholders, which include its employees, another £35m in a year's time.

The shareholders of NTL will have seen a 235 per cent return on their investment in just

five years. The deal is likely to fuel renewed criticism over the privatisation of Government-owned assets at fire-sale prices, and could lead to a sharply higher valuation for the BBC's transmission services, which have been earmarked for sale, perhaps by the end of the year.

Jeff Hoon, Labour spokesman on information technology and telecommunications, said last night: "This just demonstrates the concerns we had at the time of privatisation. If [the BBC sale]

goes ahead, we must ensure that a proper price is paid."

Last year, NTL had revenues of £109m, and pre-tax profits before extraordinary items of about £37m. It has been a big capital spender, in order to finance development of its broadcast and telecoms contracts, which include satellite as well as radio transmission. It recently won the right to provide transmission services for Channel 5, the terrestrial service scheduled for launch in early 1997.

STOCK MARKETS					
FT-SE 100	3672.60	+0.20	+0.0	3781.30	2954.20
Dow Jones	4305.40	+3.70	+0.1	4309.40	3800.90
Nikkei	1851.50	+0.50	+0.0	1898.00	1482.40
FTSE 250	2091.00	+0.00	+0.0	2091.00	1678.61
FT Small Cap	1831.96	+0.45	+0.0	1884.60	1483.22
FT All Share	21295.82	-34.16	-0.2	21320.98	14485.40
Hang Seng	11030.82	-35.89	-0.3	11194.48	8967.83
Hong Kong	2508.44	-16.98	-0.7	2525.42	1910.96
Frankfurt					-1.921

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling*

Year	Rate (%)
1980	7.50
1981	7.25
1982	7.50
1983	7.25
1984	7.50

UK medium gilt

Year	Rate (%)
1980	8.50
1981	8.25
1982	8.50
1983	8.25
1984	8.50

US long bond

Year	Rate (%)
1980	7.50
1981	7.25
1982	7.50
1983	7.25
1984	7.50

* After tax interest rate

* Treasury bill rates

Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	1 Year
UK	6.03	6.38
US	5.38	5.75
Japan	0.56	0.88
Germany	3.31	3.38

Bond Yields *

	Medium Bond (%)	Year Aps	Long Bond	OO/Year Aps
UK	7.56	8.43	8.22	8.45
US	6.39	7.17	6.70	7.42
Japan	1.86	3.11	-	-
Germany	8.48	7.18	7.21	-

* Benchmark indices

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Falls	Rises	Falls	Rises	Falls		
Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change		
Oil Mining	585	39	7.1	Devo Int	231	14	5.7
Cable & Wireless	511.5	34	7.1	Salvagean Christian	259	8	3.0
Refuge Group	510	24	4.9	Sedgwick Group	191	4	3.0

CURRENCIES					
£/\$	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54
£/DM	2.27	2.27	2.27	2.27	2.27
£/¥	162.11	162.11	162.11	162.11	162.11

DOLLAR					
London	1.5233	+0.04%	1.5867	0.8565	-0.21
New York	1.5240	+0.00%	1.6040	0.8552	-0.26
London	2.2815	-0.71%	2.2655	1.4781	-0.84%
London	162.112	+0.04%	163.025	106.425	-0.31%
Index	83.3	-0.1	85.8	95.8	-0.3

OTHER INDICATORS					
Oil Brent	19.16	-0.53	17.48	160.9	+2.7%
Gold	398.30	-1.8	383.40	107.0	+2.0%
Gold	261.47	-2.71	240.12	Base Rates	-6.00%

The Standard Life Assurance Company Annual General Meeting

The 170th Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held in the Head Office, 3 George Street, Edinburgh on Tuesday 23 April 1996 at 2.30pm.

A member entitled to attend and vote is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote. A proxy need not be a member.

By order of the Board of Directors
D M Simpson
Secretary
Edinburgh, 28 March 1996

Policyholders may obtain a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts, including the agenda, by writing to the Customer Service Information Team at PO Box 141, 1 Tanfield, Edinburgh EH3 5RG or by telephoning (0131) 245 2668. Proxy forms may be similarly obtained by members entitled to vote.

STANDARD LIFE

Redland to create European tile giant

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Redland yesterday announced plans for a radical overhaul of its building materials operations that will create Europe's largest roof tiles manufacturer with sales of DM3bn (£1.33bn). Details of the deal, which will involve a merger of its own interests with those of its successful German subsidiary, Braas, are likely to be unveiled within the next few weeks.

Robert Napier, chief executive, also said negotiations were at an advanced stage with four potential buyers of its UK bricks arm. In addition, discussions are in train to sell Redland's US brick operations, which will complete a reversal of the company's expansion in bricks early in the 1990s when it bought rival Steetley. Mr Napier admits now that Redland overpaid for that deal.

The ambitious deal with Braas comes as that company's core German activities face a rapid slowdown in construction activity. The underlying weakening in trading has been exacerbated in the early months of 1996 by poor weather across Europe, and Redland warned

that first-half profits will not match those achieved in 1995. Although Braas has given Redland exposure to the recent post-unification building surge in Germany, recession is taking its toll and Redland believes now is the right time to simplify the relationship between the two companies and reduce duplication of investment.

The shape of the proposed deal is still uncertain, but it is understood that Redland will inject its tile businesses, based in the UK, France, Spain and the Low Countries, into Braas, which focuses further east, in exchange for a mixture of cash and Braas shares.

Currently Redland owns 50.8 per cent of Braas and it is thought that the German company's minority shareholders are prepared to see that stake rise to about 60 per cent. A newly named company will be created, probably headed by a Braas-nominated chairman and with a board of directors taken from both Braas and Redland.

News of the restructuring accompanied full-year figures which underlined the difficult trading conditions facing Redland last year. Pre-tax profits be-

fore exceptional items fell 5 per cent to £55.1m (£373m), which Mr Napier said represented a strong management performance in the face of volume falls in most of its markets of up to 10 per cent. Price rises in line with inflation were pushed through and cost-cutting largely offset the volume-induced margin fall.

The reported profit figure of £273.2m was hit further by an £81.9m exceptional charge, mainly made up of book value write-offs at Genstar, Redland's aggregates operation in Maryland. A maintained final dividend of 11.2p, following the interim reduction, resulted in a full year total of 16.7p (19.4p).

In the UK, where Mr Napier said "the phones stopped ringing last March", volumes of sand, gravel, dry stone and ready mixed concrete all fell by more than 10 per cent. Higher prices offset much of the damage but the weaker housing market also hit brick demand, leading to a fall in UK profits from £41m to £35.2m.

Germany, the dominant profit contributor, saw an 11 per cent fall in DM profits, although currency movements limited the fall to £3.6m, down to £191m.



There may be more grey hairs, but 14 years after the collapse of his original Sky Train, Sir Freddie Laker's smile says it all: 'We're back in business.' Nothing could take the shine off the launch of his new transatlantic air service yesterday. Not even having to rent an aircraft for the occasion, after his own failed to arrive on time. A cockpit windscreen cracked - possibly from a bird strike - during a test flight of his own aircraft, delaying its entry into service.

The first route, Manchester to Orlando, started yesterday and Sir Freddie (above) was on hand with desk staffer Susan Turner to welcome passengers on board. Departures from London Gatwick are scheduled to start today.

The new Laker Airways service is aimed at the booming Florida family holidays market, with fares pitched at a highly competitive £299 round-trip. The original Laker Sky Train foundered in 1982 in the face of fierce competition and cut-throat fares.

Carey steps down at Slough

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Roger Carey is leaving Slough Estates, Britain's largest industrial landlord, after a boardroom reshuffle in effect eliminated his job as managing director. The former president of the British Property Federation and one of the property industry's highest-profile figures, will leave the company at the end of April.

Mr Carey's departure follows the decision by Sir Nigel Mobbs to split the roles of chairman and chief executive. His move to become executive chairman created a race for the chief executive's job, which was won by the finance director, Derek Wilson.

Both sides insisted that the parting of the ways was amicable and Mr Carey is not expected to receive any compensation. He plans to keep working in the property business but has no concrete plans.

News of the boardroom changes, which bring Slough into line with Cadbury committee recommendations, accompanied full-year figures showing an 11 per cent rise in profit before tax to £70.7m. The more important measure of net asset value per share declined during the year, however, by 3.6 per cent to 266p.

Sounding a more optimistic note than for some time, Sir Nigel said: "The past year has seen further progress in the achievement of strategic objectives, particularly the continuing improvement in occupancy." As a result the dividend was nudged up 4.9 per cent to 8.5p a share.

Slough's total portfolio was valued at £1.78bn at the end of 1995, a 3.1 per cent decline on a year earlier. The biggest hit was in the UK, where values fell almost 5 per cent, led by a 7.3 per cent fall in the value of Slough's offices. Retail properties fell by 5.6 per cent while the core industrial estate, which accounts for 58 per cent of the total portfolio, slipped by 3.9 per cent. The UK portfolio is currently rented at levels estimated to be 7.8 per cent higher than those that would be achievable on the open market. That represents a slight improvement on the over-renting of 8.5 per cent at the end of 1994.

Queens Moat struggles to profit

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Queens Moat Houses, the hugely-indebted hotel group, continues to struggle towards recovery, returning to the black last year for the first time since 1990. But Stanley Metcalfe, chairman, presented a decidedly cautious view of the future as he announced the results yesterday.

"At this early stage in the current year, I can report that trading has been satisfactory," he said. Economic growth was a major factor in the company's revenue growth, and while he was "cautiously optimistic about the trading environment for the UK in 1996," prospects for growth in Germany and France were not good, particularly against a background of intense competition.

Pre-tax profits of £42.4m in the year to December replaced a deficit of £95.2m last time, but the group still faces a mountain of debt and would have been in loss but for £48.8m of interest waived under last year's £1.3bn

capital restructuring. Borrowings stood at £1.03bn at the end of December, down from £1.28bn the previous year.

The group made another small inroad into that yesterday when it was announced that Stakis, the Scottish hotels and casinos group had paid £3.4m for the Europa, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The hotel, to be known as the Stakis Tyneside in



Improved trading: Andrew Coppel, chief executive

future, brings to three the number of Queens Moat's County hotels sold since the beginning of the year, following the disposal of eight in 1995.

These country-house hotels are deemed not to fit into the group's core Moat House brand, situated on main arterial routes within or on the edge of towns, and a further 27 have been earmarked for sale in the future.

The news left the shares unchanged at 22p yesterday - although they have soared since being re-listed at 3p last May after being suspended for more than two years.

Mr Metcalfe said that the further improvement in the group's trading performance anticipated at the half year results in September was evident in the full year figures. Operating profits rose from £35.2m to £44.7m. After adjusting for the effects of the restructuring - principally higher operating rentals - the underlying increase was 54 per cent.

Andrew Coppel, chief executive, said trading conditions had continued to improve in the UK, although there was stronger activity in the south of England than in the north.

Occupancy rates improved 4.7 percentage points to 66.8 per cent, still some way short of the market average of 71 or 72 per cent, but average room rates grew £1.29 to £42.29. That meant the rise in the yield - occupancy multiplied by average room rate - was ahead of the market, Mr Coppel said. In the Moat House division, yields were nearly 12 per cent up, but still below market levels.

The figures were boosted by a £25.1m profit on asset sales and £3.4m taken to the profit and loss account from the revaluation of the group's hotels.

This review, which was carried out by Jones Lang Wootton, showed the properties had fallen to £89m at the year end, but stripping out disposals made in 1994, the portfolio increased from £83.8m.

Booker plays down talk of imminent Nurdin bid

NIGEL COPE

Booker, the food-processing and cash-and-carry group, yesterday played down speculation that it was set to bid for Nurdin & Peacock, the rival cash-and-carry operator.

Reporting an 11 per cent rise in profits to £100m, Booker's chief executive, Charles Bowen, said: "Internal growth is our priority. The cash and food service division is growing very well and there are further efficiencies to be made."

Shares in Nurdin have been rising recently on rumours that Booker was set to strike. The situation is complicated by a large stake owned by the Peacock family as well as a 14 per cent stake controlled by the Dutch group, SHV Makro, which is also thought to be increasing its holding.

Analysts believe a Booker-

Nurdin deal would make strategic sense, enabling Booker to reduce costs and close stores that overlapped. A bid at around 197p would value the company at £250m. Booker shares closed 13p higher at 395p. Nurdin's shares edged 4p higher at 172p.

Mr Bowen was sanguine about the possibility of Makro making a bid instead, which would leave Booker with a far larger competitor. "We are gaining market share from all our competitors. Even if SHV bought Nurdin we would be confident going up against it," he added.

Booker is the largest cash-and-carry operator in the UK, with 160 sites. It has outlets in Portugal and seeks to expand in other European markets and the Far East. Nurdin is smaller and has been changing its stores into the TBW format.

Booker's figures for the year

to December were at the top end of City expectations. Profits of £100m were struck on turnover 14 per cent higher at £4.2bn. The group's salmon operations performed strongly, boosted by a 20 per cent rise in salmon consumption. Booker has maintained its market share despite some fish-dumping by Norwegian producers. Along with some Scottish producers Booker is seeking action from both the UK government and the EU. The fish and prepared-foods business could be a candidate for disposal after a difficult year.

Raw material prices have been rising and proved difficult to pass on to supermarkets. The company is therefore trying to cut costs. Cost control enabled Booker to improve margins last year and the company said it planned to repeat the performance this time.

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Blue Circle builds on upturn

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

There is no doubt Blue Circle has an excellent cement business and it is currently benefiting from some pretty buoyant construction markets around the world.

Even in the depressed UK, its command of half the market means it can maintain the industry's prices at a level which keeps out imports and yet still makes enviable margins of over 20 per cent.

Despite a 3 per cent dip in volumes, UK cement profits rose an impressive 1.9 per cent to £65.3m last year. What Blue Circle can do when markets really take off was illustrated by last year's performance overseas. Buoyant demand in the US, Chile and Malaysia saw profit rises ranging between 29 per cent and 37 per cent in those regions.

The benefits of this general upturn in the cycle shone through in group profits, which leapt from £184m to £294m in the year to December, despite being complicated by exceptional items. The 1994 charge of £59.4m - mostly the loss on the sale of the New World cookers business - was cut to £9m in 1995.

While Blue Circle has shown it can manage the core business, its diversification strategy has been disastrous. Fresh from sorting out the Armitage Shanks bathroom division, it is now having to tackle the bigger problems of its boilers-to-radiators heating offshoot, including Myson and Potterton in the UK. A restructuring announced last month is meant to deliver cost savings of £25m by next year, but that will still leave returns well short of the targeted 15 per cent return on £550m of capital employed in heating, after profits collapsed from £42.4m to £17.1m in 1995.

The cement cycle would appear to have a little more steam left in it. UK cement volumes have yet to show any recovery from the 10 per cent fall registered in the second half of last year, but there is good reason to agree with Blue Circle that the market will pick up later this year.

Construction orders up 20 per cent in the three months to January and recent plans by housebuilders to significantly raise output must feed through to cement demand eventually. Add to that price rises of over 4 per cent to be posted next month and there should be some growth this year.

Overseas, the US could now hit a plateau, but any decline from here is likely to be gentle. More questionable is whether last year's boom in Chile and the Far East can be maintained without attracting competition or being killed off by the onset of extra capacity. Blue Circle plans to use its minimal gearing and formidable cash

Next still offers rich rewards

flow for acquisitions. Given the record, that should worry investors.

At 333p, up 10p, the shares are fairly rated on a forward price/earnings ratio of 14, assuming profits just short of £300m this year.

Next's market-beating record has become so predictable that even David Jones, the retailer's chief executive, seems to be having difficulty in finding his own results interesting. What was once the high street's great recovery story has become a tale of consistent growth that puts the rest of the sector in the shade. Pre-tax profits were up 25 per cent to £125m with high street stores and the Next Directory putting in sterling performances. Disposals boosted the pre-tax figure to £142m.

After shaving the margin to boost sales over the last two years Next is keeping the return on sales constant on like-for-like turnover that is still increasing at a heady 12 per cent since the year-end.

Quite how Next is managing such increases when other retailers are struggling is not entirely clear, but the market is not arguing. Profits from the 304 stores shot up from £59m to £74.7m, while Next Directory managed a 25 per cent improvement to £19.1m.

Having pulled out of its Bath And Body Works joint venture, which had opened five Body Shop-style toiletries stores, Next is focused on those two businesses. After notching up a loss of £1m, the sale of the stake to its partner, The Limited, makes sense, as does the decision not to add to its five US stores, where one will close. More franchise openings are scheduled, however, in the Middle East, the Far East and Greece.

Even this spending will not much dent the growing cash pile, which rose £50m to £170m. The company has raised the dividend by 30 per cent and prefers an aggressive dividend policy rather than a special dividend or share buy-back. It is testing a personal loan scheme to its Directory customers which is utilising £10m of cash. If rolled out it might use £50m, but that would still leave a chunky war chest. All this hints at acquisitions and Lord Wolfson, chairman, admits that he likes to have the

ammunition available if an opportunity came along but has no current plans. Next shares have proved a phenomenal investment over the last five years. While the FT all-share index has risen 84 per cent since 1991, Next's shares have grown 38-fold. BZW has raised its forecast from £138m to £150m for the current year. With the shares up another 15.5p to 494.5p yesterday, they are on a forward rating of 18. High, but rightly so with growth set to continue.

Gloom all round for Redland

Just when it looked as if Redland was recovering from the calamitous fall in its share price since the start of 1994, it is heading south again. Yesterday, the shares slipped another 8p to 384p as the market focused on a gloomy assessment of trading in pretty much all of its markets.

That was a slightly uncharitable assessment of the 5 per cent fall in pre-tax profits last year - before asset write-downs - which represented quite a creditable management performance in the face of volume declines of between 6 and 10 per cent. The pressure to cut costs will only intensify this year, however, with trading unlikely to improve until at least the back end of 1996.

Germany is the big problem, with residential building permits slumping in the West by 28 per cent during the second half of the year, more than offsetting a 20 per cent rise in the East. Both areas experienced a progressive deterioration during the year, which augurs badly for the current year since tile volumes tend to lag permits by between six and nine months.

No surprise then that the company is planning a radical overhaul of its European roof-tile businesses, merging its own operations with those of Braas, its 50.8 per cent-owned subsidiary. Unfortunately for investors, the scale of any savings remains a mystery until the company finalises negotiations with Braas's minority shareholders.

Still, at least the company is at last making decisions based on commercial rather than financial imperatives, which is more reassuring than the treasury manoeuvres of yesteryear. Getting out of bricks appears to make sense, even if it is quite a U-turn after the ill-conceived Steetley acquisition.

With first-half profits unlikely to match 1995's, full-year forecasts are being pulled back to about £330m. That puts the shares on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 13. Supported by a 5.4 per cent dividend yield, they look reasonably secure but unexciting.

Hugs, kisses, goats and eruptions, but no spam

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

As you tuck into your prawn cocktail sandwich this lunchtime, the "Most Innovative Sandwich of the Year Award" will be being judged at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London. This is the fifth year of the awards, which are sponsored by the British Sandwich Association, the representative of a £3bn-and-growing industry. Among the tasty morsels on offer: "Hugs & Kisses, made with peaches and passionfruit on chocolate bread, with a single Rolo chocolate; Vesuvius (an eruption of flavour) made with focaccia bread and porcini cheese, with a filling of goat's cheese, spinach and tomato sauce; and the Euro-sandwich, a concoction of German (Bockwurst sausage and German mustard), Greek (houmous, olives and avocado) and French (rillettes du Mâconnais and mellee of salad leaves)." More than 320 people will attend a dinner tonight hosted by comedian Tom O'Connor at which this and other sandwich-related awards will be made. Easy on the mayo.

The Lancashire weaving village of Calder Vale, just north of Preston, is home to a 77-year-old company whose entire production consists of the red and white cotton head shawls worn only in Saudi Arabia. Yesterday the company, Lappet Manufacturing, was sold by Courtaulds Textiles to a group of anonymous Middle Eastern investors for £17m. Bob Quick, Lappet's chief executive, commented: "Courtaulds bought us in 1968 and have now decided that we are a non-core business. Making the shawls involves quite a specialised, old-fashioned method. Our business has grown with the Saudi economy." A nice position to be in, I'm sure.

Since being a basket case five years ago Next has become a



Cat-owners can now take out cover for their beloved kitty under the new "Felix Plan" from Pet Plan, the pet health insurance company. As its name suggests, the plan is a response to comments on cats by Jeremy Paxman, the noted TV broadcaster, in the *Evening Standard* on Tuesday: "I hate them," the paper reported. "I want to organise a meet on Shepherd's Bush Green every Saturday. We'll blow horns, wear bright blue anoraks and race all over west London. Then we'll tear them limb from limb." Cripes. Anyhow, for an extra £1 on the premium, Pet Plan's Felix Plan will pay out should the TV man slaughter your cat.

rip-roaring success story with remorseless growth in profits. The chain store group's chief executive, David Jones, who possesses all the charisma to be expected from a chartered accountant, told a charming story yesterday at the results press briefing. His young daughter had asked him the night before what he would be saying the next day, and he duly referred to ballooning profits, soaring sales and the like. "Same boring stuff then, Daddy," she commented. Out of the mouths of babes...

BZW has pinched a four-man equity derivatives team from HSBC Midland to cover the UK life insurance sector in structured products for the retail market. Led by Giles Rothwell, aged a mere 33, the team comprises Desmond Byrne, Paul Coleman and

Richard Ager - who's only 28. Shouldn't these people still be in school? Elsewhere in the Barclays empire yesterday, BZW Barclays Global Investors, the world's largest manager of tracker funds, lured Kevin McNulty from Prudential Portfolio Managers to be its first securities lending manager.

Mr McNulty will have plenty to tend - the company has £154bn in assets under management.

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All aboard for the mother of all takeovers



'BT's Sir Iain Vallance is just desperate to do this deal. At one stroke it gives BT the scale in international markets it needs as well as filling an obvious hole in its international spread - the Far East'

Stock market rumours as strong as those swirling around Cable & Wireless yesterday usually turn out to be true. Norwithstanding persistent denials of talks with BT over the past two weeks, C&W was last night indeed right all along. Talks over the mother of all takeovers are underway, and, by all accounts, quite near to fruition.

This is a deal that makes eminent sense for both BT and C & W. Plainly there are very substantial regulatory barriers, but none of them are insurmountable in the case of an agreed deal with ministerial backing. Mercury must be sold, or it will make a nonsense of a decade of attempts to increase competition in the UK domestic market. But there are bound to be willing buyers, including, probably, AT&T, whose presence would step up, not undermine, competition. The chief obstacle is not in any case the regulators, but the power vacuum at the top of C&W. The chairman is new to the job and the chief executive only a caretaker. Perhaps understandably, neither is inclined to take responsibility for such a fundamental decision.

BT's Sir Iain Vallance is just desperate to do this deal. At a stroke it gives BT the scale in international markets it needs as well as filling an obvious hole in its international spread - the Far East. With luck, it should also revive BT's flagging share price by giving the company new impetus outside the UK's regulatory yoke.

The terms talked of in the stock market yesterday - three BT shares and 60p in cash for every C&W share - could easily be made to add up to 600p a share if the market takes a shine to the deal. That in turn would allow C&W to agree the takeover with honour.

Valdes leaves the British unimpressed

It was hard for British investors to know whether to laugh or cry yesterday at an attempt by Charles Valdes of Calpers, the \$100bn California pension fund, to ginger up British corporate governance.

After the Cadbury and Greenbury reports, not to speak of the Hampel Committee, which is just starting its work, Mr Valdes seems to have descended from another planet. Or as one big institution preferred to put it, "Has this guy been in a submarine for three years?"

Nobody would pretend that corporate governance in the UK is anywhere near perfect. Governance fatigue, as the CBI puts it, has more to do with the amount of verbiage expended on it in the last five years than with actual results.

In that respect, at least, Britain must now be the most active exponent of corporate governance in the world.

Mr Valdes is head of investment at Calpers, a celebrated pioneer of the use of

shareholder pressure against underperforming companies, and publisher of a blacklist of those at the bottom of the class.

Mr Valdes said stock prices of companies targeted by Calpers trailed the index by 75 per cent in the previous five years, and outperformed in the subsequent five years by 54 per cent, an annual return of \$150m for the effort.

Calpers has more money abroad - \$20bn by the end of next year - than any other US pension fund, mainly in Japan, the UK, France and Germany. So it is extending its corporate governance policies overseas, and that includes us.

After careful study Mr Valdes has thankfully come to the conclusion that policy should be tailored separately to the customs of each of these markets. But it is hard to believe that Mr Valdes is yet in touch with what is happening in the UK.

He wants UK institutions to set up a corporate governance body to improve underperforming companies. This is unlikely to impress the investment committees of the National Association of Pension Funds and the Association of British Insurers, which between them cover half of UK equities. They have been in the thick of Cadbury and Greenbury for five years.

Mr Valdes' specially tailored proposal for the UK is that a set of corporate governance principles should be developed here, including "a statement that all UK corporations should adhere to the Cadbury and

Greenbury code of best practices." Since the Stock Exchange yellow book already incorporates chunks of both, this sounded quaintly out of touch to his listeners at a London conference.

UK institutions have a deep dislike of public action against companies, so it is often hard to tell whether their role is all they crack it up to be. But substantial numbers have for years done behind the scenes exactly what Calpers does so very publicly.

The UK can certainly improve its methods in this area, but it is not clear from yesterday's contribution that Calpers' advice is what it needs.

A lot of splashing at United Utilities

Since when did the announcement of 2,500 job losses become an occasion for cheering self-congratulation? Since North West Water took over its contiguous electricity distribution company, Norweb, seems to be the answer.

Yes - proclaims Sir Desmond Pitcher, chairman of the merged company, now grandly renamed United Utilities - the scope for job losses and cost cuts is even greater than we had anticipated. Another 1,700 jobs are to go on top of the 800 already planned.

Needless to say, the glee with which Sir Desmond delivered this message was not

aimed at United's hapless workforce, but at the City, where there is still some scepticism about the supposed benefits of this merger. All you sceptics are going to be proved wrong, was his breathless message. By the turn of the century, earnings enhancement will be a whopping £140m per annum, 40 per cent higher than forecast when the acquisition of Norweb was being planned. And as a consequence, we can now commit to 11 per cent real dividend growth, Sir Desmond says. On the face of it, impressive stuff. But let's have a look at the figures again. Once the tax and interest charge benefit is stripped out of the £140m, operating savings are only £95m. Furthermore, the takeover involved huge amounts of new equity so earnings per share enhancement is at best only 12 per cent, a bonus the regulator will almost certainly gobble up at the time of the next price review, if not before. You have to wonder whether it's all worth the management effort.

In Sir Desmond's mind there's no doubt about it. If the City lets him, there will be another utility acquisition before too long. There is one heartening aspect to all this empire-building, however - a strategic backdown from non-core businesses. Out goes retailing, contracting, process equipment and generation. Instead, the company is to focus entirely on being a utility service provider. An even narrower focus, on water, might ultimately have served shareholders better.

Jacques Vert chief resigns as group dives into red

NIGEL COPE

Jacques Vert, the troubled women's wear group, announced the departure of its chief executive yesterday alongside its second profits warning of the year and the withdrawal of the dividend payment.

The retailer and wholesaler, which specialises in "occasionwear" for weddings and parties, said it would make "a substantial loss" in its current year instead of the break-even City analysts were expecting. The shares, trading at more than 200p six months ago, lost 38 per cent of their value yesterday to close at 77p.

David Tiedeman, chief executive, is leaving the company after only a year in the job. He was on a two-year contract and is thought to be in line for compensation of up to £220,000.

Though most of his share options are worthless due to the collapse in the company's share price, he does have 55,000 options granted at 44p.

He will be replaced by Bill Reid who is to become executive chairman. Brian Heilbron, commercial director, will move up to chief operating officer.

The company blamed the warning on a string of problems, many of which have been dogging the group for the past year. The hot summer last year affected sales of the group's more formal clothing.

It has also experienced production difficulties at its factory in the North-east and blamed

tough trading on the high street and supplier delivery problems.

Since January the late delivery of cloth and other raw materials has delayed the production of garments which meant customer orders could not be satisfied.

A new computer system, due to have been fully installed by December has been dogged by teething problems, affecting distribution and service to wholesale customers.

Jacques Vert has been unable to deliver complete product ranges to customers either through its own stores or the concessions it operates in department stores.

The company said like-for-like sales were lower than last year which would mean a substantial loss for the year ending 27 April.

The company has decided not to pay a final dividend and to withdraw the previously announced interim payout of 2.25p per share.

It is also in discussions with its bankers about extending its facilities which only run until September. Though it is within its borrowing limits, bank debts have risen above previously forecast levels.

The company is now planning to cut costs and borrowings. "Unprofitable retail units will be reviewed and closed if necessary where it is not anticipated that a satisfactory performance can be restored," the company said.

Jacques Vert was founded by Jack Cynamon and Alan



Change of style: David Tiedeman (left), chief executive, is to leave Jacques Vert after only a year in office. Alan Green (right), a co-founder of the company, stepped back from the day-to-day running of Jacques Vert a year ago

Green. Both have stepped back from the day-to-day running of the company in the last two years and the handover has not proved a happy one.

Only six months ago the shares stood at 201p and the City was looking to re-rate the company as more of a retailer than a rag trade fashion group.

Last November it announced plans to open 50 concessions within House of Fraser's department stores to boost sales.

National Express close to Gatwick rail victory

RUSSELL HOTTEN

National Express, the coach company, is close to victory in the controversial battle to take over the Gatwick Express rail franchise after the company was yesterday confirmed as the preferred bidder.

The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising named National Express ahead of rival bids from Richard Branson's Virgin and a management buyout team that had joined forces with British Airways.

National Express was also chosen yesterday as Opra's first choice to buy the Midland Main Line rail franchise. Roger Salmon, the rail franchising director, said both bids raised competition issues and he has passed on details to the Office of Fair Trading to investigate.

Gatwick Express operates a non-stop service between London's Victoria station and

Gatwick airport. Midland Main Line operates Inter-City passenger services, principally between the East Midlands, South Yorkshire and London's St Pancras.

Bidding for Gatwick Express has been dogged by concern in the City about leaks, and doubts over whether a single company should also be awarded the Midland Main Line franchise.

The OFT is expected to be more concerned with Midland Main Line, as National Express runs coach services to destinations served on the rail route. The OFT did not hold an inquiry into the purchase by bus company Stagecoach of South West Trains because there was little overlap.

National Express said it was confident that ownership of the franchises would not go against the public interest. The company said: "The main competitor to rail services is the pri-

vate car, not National Express coach services. The overlap between the markets served by NE coach services and these train services is very small."

The company's shares rose 16p to 502p as analysts said National Express should do well from the diversification into rail.

Brian Wilson, the Labour Party's transport spokesman, said: "The inevitable outcome of handing train services over to bus companies is that they will substitute buses for trains whenever they find it advantageous to do so, without regard to passenger choice."

"Both Gatwick Express and Midland Main Line have enjoyed substantial public investment and are guaranteed money-makers. We are now seeing the country being carved up into local transport monopolies without regard for the public interest."

Industry View, page 27

US fund wins few backers in City

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

A wave of cynicism yesterday greeted calls by the largest public pension fund in the US for more aggressive shareholder activism in Britain.

Calpers, the Californian pension fund that controls nearly \$100bn of pension funds, said it wanted to bring its assertive style to underperforming management in Britain.

But the suggestions were described as "extraordinary propositions" by leading UK fund managers.

The California Public Employees Retirement Fund, which has earmarked about £2bn for the UK and European markets, has made a name for itself in the US with its high-profile exposure of underperforming management.

Speaking yesterday in London, Charles Valdes, chairman of Calpers' investment committee, said the time was right for it to become engaged in countries such as the UK.

He spoke of the so-called Calpers effect, whereby publicity about poor management, including a blacklist of companies, had led to a marked turnaround in performance.

Having decided to allocate some 20 per cent of Calpers' \$100bn (£66bn) portfolio to overseas investments, including a significant proportion in the UK market, Mr Valdes said the group wanted to become more engaged in corporate governance in these countries.

But leading British fund managers expressed doubts about what his proposals meant in practice.

"The UK probably has one of the best developed processes of corporate governance in the world. It is hard to understand exactly what Calpers can bring to this party apart from headline-grabbing," a top investment manager said.

Mr Valdes said: "Our motto will be to work co-operatively and to work collaboratively, not confrontationally... the first element is the development of corporate governance principles for each market."

IN BRIEF

• Thorn EMI is to put off its demerger by three weeks following its failure to win clearance from regulators on the timing of its first quarter results in 1996/7, the company said yesterday. The date is now set as 19 August, to allow the company time to inform shareholders of the results and to proceed with the introduction of new share incentive schemes for management. The company also said the total cost of the demerger would be £75m rather than £100m as originally estimated and that formal clearances had been received from UK tax authorities regarding the proposed demerger. US clearances have been delayed.

• Gehe of Germany's £650m all-cash bid for Lloyds Chemists was yesterday referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission by the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang. The reference was expected in the wake of last week's decision by the European Commission to pass the case back to the UK authorities. The MMC is already looking at the rival bid from UniChem.

• Sales at William Morrison, the Yorkshire-based supermarket group, passed £2bn for the first time last year although the company warned that margins were becoming tighter. New openings pushed group turnover 18 per cent higher to £2.1bn. Pre-tax profits were 10 per cent ahead at £127m.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
William Baird (F)	671m (534m)	10.3m (26.1m)	5.4p (14.8p)	9.35p (9.35p)
Blue Circle (F)	1.77bn (1.78bn)	267m (184m)	21.4p (21.1p)	12.5p (11.75p)
Boaker (F)	4.22bn (3.70bn)	82.8m (69.8m)	22.8p (21.2p)	23.1p (22.4p)
Granville (F)	92.6m (94.3m)	6.0m (10.1m)	5.9p (11.8p)	6.6p (6.6p)
Johnstone Group (F)	138m (122m)	6.5m (5.4m)	28.2p (31.7p)	11p (10p)
Wm Morrison (F)	2.10bn (1.78bn)	127m (116m)	10.67p (9.91p)	1.4p (1.2p)
West (F)	774m (653m)	142m (107m)	26.2p (21.8p)	11.75p (9p)
Quintessential House (F)	452m (427m)	42.4m (46.5m)	13.8p (12.41p)	n/a (n/a)
Redland (F)	2.50bn (2.47bn)	273m (273m)	14.8p (23p)	16.67p (19.42p)
RJB Mining (F)	1.45bn (1.17bn)	173m (161m)	67.7p (26.3p)	16p (12.5p)
Sander Engineering (F)	951m (889m)	22.1m (18.1m)	5.04p (3.35p)	3.5p (3.4p)
Stronghold Estates (F)	- (-)	70.7m (64.0m)	11.1p (9.2p)	8.5p (8.1p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (H) - Latest figures 9 months, comparative 12 months

Buoyant RJB plans £100m buy-back



Black gold: Richard Budge will repay loans by April

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

RJB Mining, the company that bought almost the entire English coalfields from the Government, said yesterday it would seek permission for a £100m share buy-back and added that it would repay the remainder of its acquisition debt by the end of April.

However, the company also warned that its new Asfordby colliery was still plagued by geological problems and that its future was in doubt.

RJB said operating conditions there were "extremely difficult" and that its viability would be assessed within the next six to nine months.

The uncertainty over the pit was the one black spot in a performance that impressed the City. Richard Budge, founder and chief executive, said RJB would ask shareholders for authority to buy back and cancel up to 10 per cent of the shares.

"Strong cash generation will enable the group to repay the remainder of the bank acquisition debt by the end of April 1996 and, therefore, we have been able to deliver greater value to shareholders than projected at the time of the English Coal acquisition," he said.

Mr Budge was speaking as RJB announced a jump in 1995 pre-tax profits to £173m from £16m the previous year, reflecting the full benefit of ac-

quiring the former British Coal mines. Earnings per share soared by 157 per cent to 67.7p and the dividend in the year increased by 28 per cent to 16p.

Gordon McPhie, finance director, said on-going strong cash generation and a high level of dividend cover would allow substantial increases in dividend in the next three years.

"Our dividend cover is still high at 4.2 times compared to an average of around two times. Our intention is to progressively increase the dividend so that around two times cover is achieved by 1998 or 1999. There is plenty to come."

RJB repaid £313m of debt during the year, leaving £55m outstanding and net gearing of

49 per cent. The company invested £55m in plant and equipment over the 12 months in addition to £500m on mining development. RJB also announced a payment of £500 in shares to each of its employees through the company's Share-save Trust.

One City analyst said: "The company has done extremely well, outstripping forecasts in the December 1994 prospectus, but the big question is still what happens in 1998 when its contracts with the generators mature." RJB's main customers are National Power and PowerGen. Their contracts with British Coal passed to the company along with the coalfields and are due to expire in 1998.

Coventry ready to cut mortgage rates

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Coventry Building Society yesterday added to the pressure being applied by mutual societies on those converting to bank status.

The society pledged to cut mortgage rates, reward loyal long-term borrowers, and raise interest rates to savers.

Around £20m a year will be given back by Coventry to its members, including both bor-

rowers and savers, roughly half its annual profits. It believes that rival institutions which need to pay dividends to shareholders will not be able to match its move.

Coventry's basic variable mortgage rate will be reduced from 7.49 per cent to 7.25 per cent to all borrowers from next Monday. The new rate compares with Abbey National's current 7.29 per cent, and is the same as the current rate

charged by Halifax, but slightly higher than the 6.99 per cent now charged by the most aggressive mutual building societies including the Yorkshire.

Existing customers who have had the same mortgage with the Coventry for the past five years or more will enjoy an even deeper cut, reducing the cost of their mortgage to 6.49 per cent effective from 1 May.

This will save a borrower with a £40,000 endowment mortgage

around £30 a month on the current rate, chief executive Martin Ritchie, said yesterday. By the end of this year, roughly half the society's 100,000 borrowers will benefit from the "Privilege Rate."

New borrowers will be offered a 10 day cooling off period after the issue of a mortgage advance, to allow borrowers to change their minds if they are not satisfied with the product they have

chosen, with a full refund of any charges or fees. The society's 575,000 investors will also benefit from increases of up to 0.5 per cent on all variable rate savings accounts, instead of the rate reduction they might have expected following the last cut in base rates.

The Coventry's will pay 6.9 per cent net on a £3,000 Tessa account, compared with 6.5 per cent at Halifax and 6 per cent at Abbey National.

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Proteus

Rail privatisation set to put 20,000 jobs on the line

The Rail, Maritime and Transport Union believes 20,000 to 30,000 jobs are at risk as a result of railway privatisation. Privately, many investors in the 42 rail businesses that have already been sold off would probably agree.

It is hard to think of a better reason, from a purely investment perspective, to put money into the Railtrack situation in May or into one of the many sales of BR subsidiaries that are under way.

A crude rule of thumb in the City is that whatever the job cuts achieved in an industry while it is in the public sector, there is usually at least another 30 per cent of efficiency gains to be found once the privatisation has taken place, and much of that is likely to be achieved by a reduction in headcount.

Apply that percentage to the railways, and the numbers put forward by the RMT look perfectly reasonable. In the longer term, they might even prove on the low side.

It is a curious fact, however, that railway jobs are hardly ever discussed in public by ministers, government advisers or the owners of newly-privatised rail companies. It is like a money war, with the real campaign unlikely to begin until the main privatisations are through.

The signaller's strike in 1994 underlined how much damage could be done to the industry by a dispute between a national union and a centralised management.

There is little benefit for the Government in reminding in-



INDUSTRY VIEW PETER RODGERS

vestors of this fact of life by boasting publicly about the potential for job saving and stirring up the anger of the unions. Indeed, until recently ministers have been claiming convincingly that the sell-off could create additional jobs.

Government advisers say that nobody in Whitehall has even attempted to calculate the possible impact of privatisation on jobs right across the railways, and now the railways are so fragmented the exercise may never be possible again.

Labour, too, has less to gain than appears at first sight from making the potential for job losses a central part of its anti-privatisation campaign. Digging in its heels against job cuts and efficiency gains would make New Labour sound just like the old.

The organisation that probably has the least potential for immediate large job cuts is probably Railtrack, though one insider claims it should still be

perfectly possible to weed out 10 to 15 per cent of the 11,000 headcount over the next couple of years.

As the only truly national organisation left in the rail system, Railtrack remains the most vulnerable to strike action because it is brought to a halt so is the entire railway network.

For Labour, the reality is that this would make renationalisation into a poisoned chalice because in government it would be on one side of the table in any dispute. The signaller's strike

responsible for a rethink of the rate of contraction and a modest increase in rail jobs up to 1993 (see chart).

The biggest potential for job reductions is to be found elsewhere in the system. Railtrack took the absolute minimum of staff out of the old British Rail, leaving all its service functions to be privatised separately. The intention was to make industrial relations easier to handle by splitting the behemoth of British Rail into many smaller and more manageable parts.

When Railtrack was separated from BR, Mr Horton left 40,000 people in BR operations such as maintenance and track renewal which are essential to the company's functioning.

The result is that all the really big economies are to be found in the bits that Railtrack left behind, and especially the British Rail Infrastructure Services Companies, which at the end of the last financial year had 22,000 staff.

These are the companies that employ the maintenance and construction workers who keep the track, bridges, tunnels and signalling in order.

Not only have the BR businesses been splintered by dozens of management buyouts and takeovers by construction firms, but smaller sub-contractors are splitting it still further. The RMT cites cases of track and signalling employees taking redundancy from British Rail on a Friday and coming back as sub-contractors the following Monday.

The balance of industrial re-

lationships power has shifted firmly towards employers.

Although track renewal work will receive a boost from a stepped-up investment programme, including the West Coast main line and the Thameslink 2,000 project, staffing in the BR companies as a whole looks set to decline sharply over the next few years.

The same pattern is expected

in many other former BR subsidiaries. It has already been seen at the former British Rail Engineering works, which were taken over by ABB with 8,500 employees, and are now down to 5,000.

Insiders claim that there is even bigger potential for job cuts among the train operating companies, which employ 47,000 people, including most

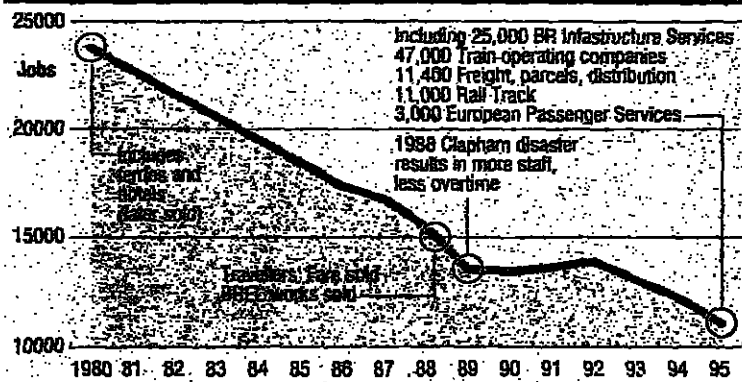
of the drivers. They, too, have been fragmented, into 25 separate companies.

Stagecoach, the bus company that runs South West Trains - one of the first two train operating franchises let - has so far told the RMT of 125 job losses and is expected to announce several hundred more among the rail operator's 4,000 staff. There is no sign yet

that Stagecoach is about to confront the powerful drivers' unions, where the scope for improving working practices is said to be just as great as it was with British Airways pilots a decade ago.

But job cuts are central to the economics of the railway privatisation as they were with electricity and water, and the process has hardly begun.

Railway jobs: The long decline



The sell-off so far

Rolling stock leasing companies
Train franchises
Red Star
Rail Express Systems
Freightliner
Track maintenance & renewal
Design & specialist engineering
Heavy maintenance depots
BR Telecoms
Central Services
Railtrack

All 3 sold £1.8bn
2 sold, 23 to go
Sold
Sold
Final bids in
6 sold, rest in negotiation
7 sold
All 6 sold
All 12 sold
Floets May £1.8bn

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot
US	1.5233	8.4	24.21	1000	0.6785
Canada	2.0766	11.3	30.37	13633	2.1
Germany	2.2556	56.48	157.47	14781	29.28
France	7.6323	140.16	371.40	50480	64.57
Italy	2.2949	75.90	221.26	15722	57.64
Japan	162.71	70.25	225.26	10643	45.44
ECU	12.93	5.11	45.40	12558	7.8
Belgium	48.276	12.9	34.29	30380	58.48
Denmark	6.8532	136.95	411.37	51700	80.40
Netherlands	2.5525	65.54	189.75	15814	32.59
Ireland	0.5703	9.5	25.90	15700	3.6
Norway	5.7855	116.64	329.23	8491	42.17
Spain	168.48	38.48	117.34	12439	32.38
Sweden	10.338	9.15	25.34	61553	99.123
Switzerland	1.9777	68.45	182.53	38.36	11.45
Australia	1.9463	20.21	57.45	12776	19.21
Hong Kong	11.778	101.61	224.70	72320	12.72
Malaysia	3.8865	0.0	0.0	23383	4.14
New Zealand	2.2477	43.57	133.56	14756	30.32
Saudi Arabia	5.780	0.0	0.0	37505	2.7
South Africa	2.462	0.0	0.0	14039	41.30

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Dollar	Country	Spot	Dollar
Argentina	1.8231	0.9597	Nigeria	12.616	83.5000
Austria	1.5530	0.9342	Oman	0.9567	0.9251
Brazil	1.5047	0.9577	Pakistan	52.5421	34.4955
China	12.7000	8.5355	Philippines	39.8488	26.2200
Egypt	5.7764	3.3590	Portugal	232.763	22.8200
Finland	7.0753	4.8488	Qatar	5.5484	3.8420
Ghana	2.28034	1.96900	Russia	7.95535	4.85400
Greece	3.67265	2.61020	South Africa	6.8320	4.00500
India	51.8567	34.0500	Taiwan	45.181	27.2500
Kuwait	0.4560	0.2993	UAE	5.5971	3.8736

Forward rates quoted low to high are at a discount; subject from spot rate at spot rate.
*Dollar rates quoted are approximate.
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0201 223 3033.
Calls cost 36p per minute (cheaper rates) 48p other times.

Interest Rates

UK	Base	600%	Germany	Discount	300%	US	Prime	8.75%	Japan	Discount	0.50%
France	Intervention	3.00%	Canada	Lombard	5.00%	Belgium	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	Discount	3.00%
Italy	Discount	8.00%	Spain	Prime	7.00%	Spain	10-Day Repo	8.00%	Switzerland	Discount	1.50%
Netherlands	Advances	3.00%	Denmark	Discount	3.75%	Sweden	Repo (Avg)	7.00%	Lombard	4.25%	

Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	30yr
UK	6.00%	7.54	8.1%	8.5%	8.5%
US	5.1%	6.1%	6.4%	6.8%	6.8%
Japan	8.4%	1.4	3%	3.9%	4.0%
Germany	8.1%	8.1%	8.1%	8.1%	8.1%
France	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Local Authority	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Local Authority	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Local Authority	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%

Tourist Rates

2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys
Australia	1.8231	0.9597	Nigeria	12.616	83.5000
Austria	1.5530	0.9342	Oman	0.9567	0.9251
Brazil	1.5047	0.9577	Pakistan	52.5421	34.4955
China	12.7000	8.5355	Philippines	39.8488	26.2200

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Est/Cont	Open
Long Oil	Jun 96	104.08	104.18	104.18
German Bund	Jun 96	185.85	185.85	185.85
Italian Bond	Jun 96	133.90	133.90	133.90
UK Sterling	Jun 96	1.9368	1.9368	1.9368

Commodity Index

Euro SP	(Sep 96)	98.11	98.15	98.07	3372	3386
FT-SE 100	(Jun 96)	3682.0	3682.0	3645.0	2368	6147
FT-SE 250	(Jun 96)	433.0	433.0	433.0	779	3593
Eurosto	(Jun 96)	90.35	90.39	90.30	1202	4182
	(Jun 96)	108.05	108.15	107.45	47981	48176

Liffe FT-SE Index Option						
Settlement price: 3668.0		closing offer price			Call/Put	
Series	3600	3650	3700	3750	Total/vote	

Energy

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Est/Cont	Open
Long Oil	Jun 96	104.08	104.18	104.18
German Bund	Jun 96	185.85	185.85	185.85
Italian Bond	Jun 96	133.90	133.90	133.90
UK Sterling	Jun 96	1.9368	1.9368	1.9368

Commodity Index

Commodity Indices					GC&S Indices	
	Base date	% Spot	31 Dec	% YTD Year ago	% Change Yr	
Index	1870=100	208.21	+1.07	203.50	+2.32 179.00 +15.32	
Agricultural	1870=100	280.25	+0.77	281.75	+3.02 262.81 -19.84	
Energy	1963=100	73.00	+1.08	71.31	+2.51 60.30 +12.22	
Industrial Metals	1977=100	169.49	-0.23	163.32	-1.98 204.38 -7.28	
Livestock	1970=100	167.74	+1.84	162.71	+2.75 170.84 -9.83	
Precious Metals	1873=100	511.44	-0.40	489.86	+4.41 464.30 -5.51	

Source: Commodity Section & GC&S as a byproducts and byproducts of Commodities, Section & GC&S as of 27 March '96

Industrial Metals

Aluminum	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43
Aluminum	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43
Aluminum	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43
Aluminum	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43	1542.43

Precious Metals

Platinum	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00
Platinum	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00
Platinum	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00
Platinum	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00	432.00

Agricultural

Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00
Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00
Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00
Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00

Other Softs

Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00
Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00
Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00
Wheat	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Latest Unit Trust Prices																															
Stock				Stock				Stock				Stock				Stock				Stock				Stock							
Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld	
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sport

Chamorin has heart to stir Paris romance

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

The Sheffield Eagles will adopt an uncharacteristic role at the Charley Stadium in Paris tonight when they try to stamp on Super League's most fragile bloom.

The Eagles are the best — some would say only — example of successful expansion of rugby league's boundaries in Britain. Now they present a daunting barricade in the way of the Paris St-Germain club's hopes of establishing themselves. "I wish them well," Sheffield's founding father, Gary Hetherington, said. "Although we want to beat them, it is very important that they are seen to be competitive."

Having examined the available evidence, he believes that they will be. "They will be much harder to beat at home than people are expecting," Paris are led by one player Hetherington would have loved to put in a Sheffield shirt tonight, but Pierre Chamorin opted to stay in France rather than join his friend and fellow-countryman, Jean-Marc Garcia, in south Yorkshire.

Chamorin is a class centre. He just glides over the ground," Hetherington said. "He knows and respects the ability of two other Frenchmen who have passed through the Don Valley. Laurent Lucache and Frederic Banquet, as well as Patrick Entick. The national side's scrum-half and captain, who played for Hull and Leeds.

The Paris chief executive, Tas Baitieri, who has watched the players blend into a team over the past few weeks, is another who believes that they will exceed all expectations. "There is tremendous pride in this squad," he said. "Other teams

underestimate us at their peril." There are problems, however, with injuries depriving Paris of three of their original selections for their opening match: Bernard Lacombe, David Despin and Frederic Teixido. On top of that, the tenuous professionalism of the game in France is underlined by the withdrawal of Pascal Jampy, because he has not been able to get time off from his employers.

For part-time players based in the south, as all the current squad are, travel to Paris to prepare for matches is likely to be a recurring headache. "We would like to relocate everyone to Paris, but that would be very costly," Baitieri says. For the meantime, PSG will be the best-travelled team in Super League, taking as long to trek to Paris as most English clubs.

Some members of the side have travelled a long way already. As well as three Australians and a New Zealander in tonight's line-up, they also have the former captain of the Polish rugby union team, Gregory Kacala, and the Moldovan, Mikhail Piscunov, on the wing in place of Lacombe.

Piscunov has been timed as faster than Martin Offiah and has been a target for clubs in Australia and Britain, so his inclusion should not weaken the side unduly.

There will be some well-travelled supporters at tonight's game as well. Apart from more than 1,000 fans who are travelling from Sheffield, a ticket offer through a French TV channel has been taken up by more than 10,000 people. Many of them from league's heartland in the south. Baitieri is confident of a crowd of 15,000 and says that the Charley Stadium's 22,000 capacity could be reached.



Calm Casey seeks a place in the sun

It was cold for the time of year, cold enough to make Terry Casey nervous. "Couldn't be happier with the horse," he said, "but I'd like to feel a change in the weather."

A bit of warmth is what Casey wants for Rough Quest, the 10-year-old, Irish-bred gelding he is sending out at Aintree tomorrow in the Martell Grand National.

No wonder. A nip in the air, Casey thinks, was one of the reasons why Rough Quest did not mount a more serious challenge for the Gold Cup at the Cheltenham Festival two weeks ago, finishing second to Imperial. "When the leaders broke away down the hill he was left with too much to do but I am fairly sure that the temperature troubled him. Like the sun on his back, but then don't we all," Casey said.

On a summer's day the views from Beare Green near Dorking in Surrey can be quite glorious but on Tuesday mist shrouded the surrounding hills, a metaphor for Aintree's uncertainty. As always, imponderables crowd in on assessment. Getting a horse in peak condition for the race is a feat in itself, never mind the doubts Casey may still harbour about Rough Quest's involvement just two weeks since the Gold Cup when victory would have earned the horse a long vacation. "No question about that," Casey said. "We wouldn't have entertained the Grand National and I was not sure about what to do until last Saturday. When we got back from Cheltenham he seemed well enough, not greatly affected, and there was the alternative of the Irish National."

Important factors in a discussion Casey held with his employer, Andrew Waters, who owns Rough Quest, were a distinctly favourable weight of 10st 7lb and Aintree's anticlockwise direction. "It suits the horse to go that way around," Casey said, "but even with those advantages he was ridiculously short in the betting."

Ken Jones encounters Rough Quest's trainer who is geared up for the National

Casey, who claims to have never struck a bet in the 25 years he has spent racing since beginning an apprenticeship with Aubrey Brazzon at the Curragh, advises supporters of Rough Quest to play a waiting game. "In my mind, the price is still unrealistic and he's sure to drift a bit more," he said.

The trainer was sitting in the cluttered lounge of a comfortable cottage set across from the small, tidy yard that is home to Rough Quest and 15 other horses. A man of average height with alert eyes, he had on working clothes and slippers. Smoke swirled from the small cigar he held in strong fingers.

On one wall there was the usual array of past achievements: Rough Quest winning the Ritz Club Chase at Cheltenham last year, scoring at the Puncethurst Festival, more recently successful in the Racing Post Chase when brought home by Richard Dunwoody.

While Dunwoody may have fancied the ride on Rough Quest tomorrow, trainer and owner have remained loyal to Mick Fitzgerald. "He knows the horse well, gets on with him," Casey said, "so I have no worries in that respect."

An interesting man, Casey conveys that impression of grizzled strength Bill Shankly saw in Tom Finney. You can sense independence, too. This week when BBC television cameras were wrongly positioned to get footage of Rough Quest at full gallop, Casey understandably refused to stage a repeat performance. "All the attention we have been getting is very nice and, of course, it is good for the stable," he said. "But you have to draw the line somewhere. My priority is the horse's preparation. I ride him myself before personally seeing to his diet and feeding, and I roll the gallops."

Born Dec 50, 50 years ago, Casey knows the ups and downs of life, coming to his present po-

sition as a salaried trainer after the bleak experience that resulted from a decision to set up on his own in Lambourn. "I'd gained plenty of experience as a head lad to Paddy Mullins, and when looking after John Upson's horses [Casey sent out Over The Road to win the 1988 National Hunt Chase at Cheltenham] but when I went on my own things did not work out and after four pretty depressing years I sold the stables."

A change of fortune came when Casey answered an advertisement placed by the Waters family. "You only have to look around to see that this is a wonderful set-up," he said. "The Waters are fine people to work for, and I can train for other owners without that can cripple you about one o'clock in the afternoon. Casey was relishing an hour's break from his chores and the respite from the presence of interrogators. Sitting back in an easy chair, he lit an other cigar, his daily ration increasing as the great race draws nearer.

It is not one about which he knows a great deal. "Of course, I've been at Aintree before," he said, "but to train a horse for the National is a new experience." The way to tackle it is common knowledge anyway. Hunt around the first circuit, stay in touch with the pace then get ready for a big effort from the last, on past the Elbow. If only it were so simple.

Casey went silent, drawing again on his cigar. "I just hope it isn't a slog," he said. "Hate to see horses hurt." Never mind the glory, the thing uppermost in Casey's mind is Rough Quest's welfare.

"Have you spent much time in Ireland?" he asked. "Yes," I replied.

"Lovely place, lovely," he added. His thoughts were momentarily far from Aintree.

JUST THE TICKET: A guide for the sporting spectator

PICK OF THE DAY

Saturday / Rowing

Head of the River Race

Mortlake to Putney

The River Thames in London will be awash with rowers tomorrow when the Head of the River Race, the winter showpiece, gets underway. Starting at 11.50am, the first of 420 eights at 2.45 British and European clubs sets out on the gruelling 4½-mile championship race from Mortlake to Putney. Stephen Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent, the Olympic Gold medalists, will be in the Leader 1 eight, which finished second last year.

Rugby League: Super League: Bradford Bulls v Leeds Rhinos 12.30pm. Hull Vikings v Wakefield Trinity 1.30pm. York City Knights v Doncaster Rovers 2.30pm. Wigan Warriors v Salford Red Devils 3.30pm. Batavia v Hull Kingston Rovers 4.30pm. Hull Kingston Rovers v Batavia 5.30pm. Wakefield Trinity v York City Knights 6.30pm. Doncaster Rovers v Wigan Warriors 7.30pm. Leeds Rhinos v Bradford Bulls 8.30pm.

Rugby Union: Championship: Bath v Gloucester 12.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 1.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 2.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 3.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 4.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 5.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 6.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 7.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 8.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 9.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 10.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 11.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 12.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 1.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 2.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 3.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 4.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 5.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 6.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 7.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 8.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 9.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 10.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 11.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 12.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 1.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 2.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 3.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 4.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 5.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 6.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 7.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 8.30pm. Exeter v Bristol 9.30pm. Gloucester v Bath 10.30pm. Bristol v Exeter 11.30pm. Bath v Gloucester 12.30pm. 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sport

Star made by the 10 wise men

If Mark Chaloner wins the World Squash Championships – and many people are saying that it is not a matter of if, but when – his victory speech is likely to take quite some time.

It is not that Chaloner, who takes part in the British Open, which starts on Monday at the Cardiff Institute of Sport, is naturally garrulous. But his list of credits ("I would particularly like to thank...") is substantially more than mum and dad. Those who know him well say that Chaloner will certainly give full credit to the 10 wise men.

Chaloner, 23, has shot into squash's elite faster than a Jansher Khan forehand. In 1994, he was rated 53 in the world and only 15th in the United Kingdom. He had a reputation as a talented player but one who seemed unable to handle pressure on key points.

Now he is ninth in the world and the UK's No 2: fitter, stronger and with a killer touch. The secret? A unique (for squash, anyway) support team of coach, psychologist, masseur, marketing consultant, physio-

therapist, sports scientist, business adviser, racket sponsor, financial adviser and personal sponsor. He is the star who saw the 10 wise men.

The man who turned Mark Chaloner, squash player, into Mark Chaloner Ltd is his manager and coach, John Milton. "It all started when Mark was 18. I was coaching the Herts juniors at the time. He came to see me and said: 'I want to turn professional: what do I do?' I didn't know."

Unfettered by traditional thinking, Milton talked to lots of people, from Steve Overt's coach, Harry Wilson, to the former squash world champion Jonah Barrington. But his real inspiration came from football. "I realised it is basically business. However talented a person, he can't manage every aspect. You have to find the right person, someone with special skills but in tune with you." Basic stuff, perhaps, but for squash it was revolutionary.

Milton sought four key people: a psychologist, a physio, a masseur, and a scientist. It



KEITH ELLIOTT
at large

took nearly four years to find the right combination. Now the formula has added extra ingredients. Milton has reinforced the team and set up Prospects Squash Management, which aims to give the same specialist approach to other rising stars.

It is a business, and the players are the product. "For example, we set targets for Mark to achieve. And like any business, everything doesn't always go right. He had some good results between 18 and 22, but never really showed the kind of form consistently that he has achieved in the past 12 months."

At one stage, Chaloner came close to giving up, but as Milton moulded his team together, his theory turned into practice. Chaloner suddenly came good. He won the British Under-23 Championships in 1994, and has not looked back. "There are aspects of his game that he needs to work on, but I am certain that he will apply himself to them and he has the willpower to get through," Milton said.

It might appear that sports psychologist Alfred Jones, from Horsham, Surrey, had finished his work now that Mark has overcome his own mental barriers. Under his influence, Chaloner has risen from 87th in the world to ninth. But Jones says a new set of challenges face their protégé. "The difference between a very good player and a champion is that the champion wins when he is not playing well."

Many potentially great players do not succeed because external problems, mainly money, affect their concentration. Worse than someone with hiccups at a snooker final, Milton

has surrounded Chaloner with people to remove these worries.

For example, Grays supplies his equipment while JCL gives him support on travelling, a retainer and an achievement bonus. Norman Elliott, the director of finance for ICL Sorbus Europe, first saw Chaloner as a junior player in the Herts League. "It was clear he was going places, but just as important to us was the way he handled himself. He was the sort of person we wanted to be associated with."

These sentiments are echoed by Richard Gray, marketing manager for Grays of Cambridge. "Mark plays a key role in adapting our range of rackets."

Chaloner could earn as much as £50,000 this year if he continues to progress. That may be shoe lace sponsorship for tennis professionals but it is pretty good money for a squash player.

A financial adviser, Ray Milsted, is guiding him through these years of relative poverty (Chaloner earned less than £18,000 last year), but ensuring the money is wisely invested if

he joins the big earners and, with a relatively short earning span, it is important that Chaloner's potential is maximised. That is the job of management consultant Andy Mawson. Marketing Mark, meanwhile, is down to Mike Osborne.

Ed Winter, who is responsible for exercise physiology at Bedford University, assesses Chaloner's strengths and weaknesses about four times a year. "He is young and still developing, but his prospects are excellent." Both physio Mike Varney and the final team member, masseur Peter King, concur. "There are much bigger guys that I treat who can't take treatment at the depth Mark likes me to work. I can see him coming on in leaps and bounds," King says.

A gimmick, or a professional approach to a sport renowned for its amateur approach? Milton says: "Squash is a very insular sport. It doesn't look outside itself enough. Some of the world's top 10 players are not earning what Mark is getting. But this is only the start."



Chaloner: Taking care of business Photograph: Peter Jay

Teenagers oust Boxall and Cooper

Tim Glover sees the semi-final line-up settled in golf's Sunningdale Foursomes

About the only thing that changes over the Old Course are the names of the winners of the Sunningdale Foursomes. Nearly 70 years ago Bobby Jones shot 66 here and he would still remember every hole. He would probably also recognise the menu, the only concession to modern developments being a reassurance that the beef comes from the "finest Scottish herds grazed naturally". As for humble pie, the recipe is as it always was.

Reputations count for nothing. Yesterday morning, in the fourth round of the 55th Foursomes, Richard Boxall and Derrick Cooper, defending champions, were sent packing by a couple of teenagers.

But then this championship, played by young and old, amateur and professional, male and female, prize rooster and feather duster, is a timely reminder that golf is perhaps the most humbling of sports.

Last Sunday the Australian Wayne Riley was being fêted as the Portuguese Open champion in Lisbon, confirmation that he is now a serious contender following his victory in the Scottish Open at Carnoustie last summer. Riley, who won £54,000 in Portugal, paid a modest entry fee to play in the Sunningdale Foursomes and yesterday he, too, shook hands with humility.

Riley, who has a house in Camberley, Surrey, partnered Gary Smith, the professional at Camberley Heath. Smith coaches Riley and Boxall so yesterday was not exactly the most memorable day of his career. Sean Whiffin, a professional from Enfield, and his amateur partner, Jeremy Jones, were four up after 12 holes before Riley and Smith, in tandem with pendulum putters, restored the balance.

The match went to extra holes and at the 20th Riley's 10-foot putt

for victory bobbled alarmingly and kicked left. The end came at the 21st, the short par-four third, where Smith left his pitch shot woefully short and Jones chipped to within four feet of the flag, enabling his partner to win the hole and the match with a birdie three. Alas Smith and Riley.

Boxall and Cooper, seasoned campaigners on the European Tour, were given short shrift by a couple of amateurs not yet old enough to understand the coincidence of nerves with a four-foot putt. Luke Donald, 18, from Beaconsfield, and Michael O'Connor, 19, from Stoke Poges, were in receipt of two strokes from Boxall and Cooper but it was a superfluous advantage.

Donald and O'Connor won four of the first five holes and Boxall and Cooper were put out to grass at the 14th. The teenagers finished in style, Donald holing a 10-foot putt for an eagle three to secure a handsome 5 and 4 win. Donald and O'Connor took an even shorter cut, putting out Kenilworth's Warren Bladon and Gareth Jenkins 7 and 5 in the quarter-finals.

This morning Donald and O'Connor meet Whiffin and Jones in the semi-finals. In the other semi, the Scottish pairing of tour professionals Gillian Stewart and Julie Forbes play John Morgan and Mark Landrum. Stewart, a beaten finalist in 1987, has the assistance here this week of Ian Wright, the former caddy to Seve Ballesteros.

Stewart and Forbes were two down after two against Richard Hurst and Trevor Patterson and were one down playing the 16th. They won the hole with the benefit of a shot off the handicap and won the 18th and the match with a five to a six after their opponents had been bunkered. Humble pie was also on the supper menu. Scores, Sporting Digest, page 31

Ballesteros has to withdraw

Seve Ballesteros was forced to withdraw after playing only 10 holes of the Players' Championship at Ponte Vedra Beach in Florida yesterday.

The Spaniard, who is languishing in 174th place in the European Order of Merit after playing only two events on this season's tour, suffered more problems with his back.

Ballesteros, winner of three Opens and two US Masters, reported that his back, which had forced him recently to take a five-month break from golf, felt fine on the range and did not tighten up until he had hit his sixth tee shot.

"I can't swing the club. I couldn't get it far enough back and couldn't swing it forward," he said. Ballesteros still hopes to play next week in Atlanta and at the Masters the following week.

Ballesteros, recently named captain of the European Ryder Cup team, shot 41 for his first nine and then bogeyed the 10th hole to stand six over par when he pulled out.

In Santo da Serra, England's Paul Lyons at last made a name

for himself on the European circuit when he took a share of the first-round lead in the Madeira Island Open.

The 29-year-old from Bromley, playing only his fourth tour event in a professional career dating back to 1987, had an eagle and five birdies in a four-under-par 68, which "on a blustery day was good enough to put him alongside another Englishman, Ross McFarlane, in the race for the £250,000 first prize."

The age of Paul Lee who yesterday became the youngest speedway rider in the world to be on an official contract when he joined Peterborough. The Nottingham teenager will ride for the Panthers second team.

TODAY'S
NUMBER

15

The age of Paul Lee who yesterday became the youngest speedway rider in the world to be on an official contract when he joined Peterborough. The Nottingham teenager will ride for the Panthers second team.

1

I'M ALL WIRED UP. I'M JUST GONNA E-MAIL OUR SOUTH AMERICAN CONTACT TO GET THE RATES IN CHILEAN CURRENCY.

2

MINUTES LATER...

UH-OH. I MUST HAVE PRESSED THE WRONG BUTTON. SOMEONE'S SENT ME A RECIPE FOR CHILLI CON CARNE.

The WORLD of OLIVER & CLAIRE

3

YOU E-MAILED THE MEXICAN RESTAURANT BY MISTAKE. THAT'S TERRIBLE. HE'S NOT ALLOWING NEARLY ENOUGH GARLIC.

4

MERCURY CAN SHOW YOU HOW YOU CAN SEND DATA INTERNATIONALLY, SEAMLESSLY, INSTANTLY.

5

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Hughes focuses on his chance to make history



There are those Chelsea players for whom Wembley 1994 remains such a bitter memory that even now, two years on, they find it impossible to watch a recording of the game. For Mark Hughes there is no play-back pain, a goal and a 4-0 victory granting Manchester United a Double celebration. Two other winning Cup final occasions swell the video collection in the Hughes household. One more and he will have

achieved something no other player this century can lay claim to, and as fate would have it the side who at Villa Park on Sunday obstructed his Wembley return and a shot at a historic third winner's medal is the one he left behind last summer.

Obstructing the Chelsea striker's pursuit of FA Cup glory in Sunday's semi-final is his former club. Trevor Haylett reports

There can be no divided loyalties as far as I am concerned. The chances of Chelsea making it will rise considerably if the strong man at the head of their attack shakes off a calf strain, a legacy of the quarter-final against Wimbledon. According to Glenn Hoddle, the Chelsea manager, it was a game that best showed what Hughes is all about: skill, aggression and total commitment, and woe betide any injury that dares come between Hughes and his destiny.

At 32, Hughes's desire remains as intense as when he first emerged at Old Trafford 13 years ago. Frequently it carries him over the line of acceptability, and an appearance before the Football Association next week to explain the indiscretions which have accom-

panied 45 disciplinary points that could put his appearance at Wembley in jeopardy. It is one facet of his game that has disappointed him since he arrived at Stamford Bridge. That and scoring goals. He has eight but knows it is insufficient in a side short of marksmen.

"It's different at United where the goals tend to be spread around the team. Apart from Eric [Cantona] there's Ryan [Giggs], Lee Sharpe and so many others. Andy Cole has taken stick unfairly for the

chances he has missed. He has contributed a lot with his work outside the box, and I just hope he doesn't take it out on us by knocking one in on Sunday."



Hughes: No divided loyalties

chances he has missed. He has contributed a lot with his work outside the box, and I just hope he doesn't take it out on us by knocking one in on Sunday."

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL: Venables and Brown see encouraging signs for Euro 96 but McCarthy suffers losing start

England subdue their detractors

GLENN MOORE

It is often hard to read friendlies and Wednesday's international between England and Bulgaria was no exception. There are some who believe that foreign teams only try in competitive matches and view every English performance accordingly. If England win easily, the opposition were not interested; if they do not, England were rubbish.

Such a simplistic view ignores the fact that even a settled side like Bulgaria has people playing for their places, and every country has its pride. With slight reservations England's 1-0 win over Bulgaria, one of the dark horses for Euro 96, was impressive.

The reservations concern England's inability to kill off their opponents in a first half when the visitors may have been less than fully committed, and their loss of dominance in the second period.

Having only assembled on Tuesday, and then lost both Hristo Stoichkov and an early goal, Bulgaria could be forgiven for starting slowly.

The second half, when more motivated fringe players were introduced, and senior players reacted to a half-time tongue-lashing, may be a truer indication of their mettle - and England's ability.

Yet England were still the better side. By the time David Seaman was exercised in the closing stages, Teddy Sheringham, Les Ferdinand and Steve McManaman had each had chances to se-

curate victory. It was a night when no England player could be said to have played badly. Steve Stone, though more subdued, was typically solid and was a frequent visitor to the box - only this time the knock-downs did not fall his way. On the other flank McManaman illustrated his growing confidence at this level with a couple of thrilling runs. Both players came inside while maintaining England's shape.

With Paul Ince and Paul Gascoigne holding the centre, England had an encouraging balance. Ince made a fine return. "Just like the old Paul Ince of Manchester United," it was suggested to the England coach. "Err, similar," said a wary Venables. "Playing in Italy has opened his mind tactically."

Indeed, this was a more restrained Ince, no longer chasing all over the park, diving in with tackles, and being caught out of position and in the referee's notebook.

Though Ince says he is the same player, he is not. He appears to have accepted that his best role is as a defensive midfielder, protecting the back four and only advancing when appropriate. At one stage on Wednesday he stepped into central defence when Gareth Southgate moved forward; at another he filled the right-back spot as Gary Neville pushed up.

It brought to mind Ruud Gullit's assertion, before the Newcastle United game a few weeks ago, that it was Manchester, not New-

castle, whose game more closely matched Dutch total football. Gullit pointed out that Manchester's players were better at filling each other's positions. Later that night there was a classic example when Gary Neville went forward. As the attack broke down one looked to the right-back spot, and there was Eric Cantona, filling the hole.

Venables is aiming for similar versatility with his players. This needs ability as well as discipline. It is all very well a left-back being on the wing, or vice-versa, but he needs to know what he is doing when he gets there. Thus Venables' preference for young, flexible defenders, like the Nevilles, Southgate and Steve Howey.

Some positions remain the home of specialists. The way Les Ferdinand took his goal will have given Venables - and Alan Shearer - much to think about. So, too, Fowler's appearance. While he had no chance to score, a sweet cross-field ball to McManaman illustrated both the growing range of his game, and his composure.

Venables' evening was capped by news of Darren Anderton, who had 45 minutes for Spurs reserves. He could yet be an influence in the summer.

A footnote on a busy international night of 11 matches only the attendance in Dublin exceeded that at Wembley. Germany could only attract 25,000 to play Denmark. Belgium and France drew just 16,000, while Portugal had a derisory 3,000 for the visit of Greece.



Paul Ince, who impressed in midfield on his return to the England side on Wednesday

Photograph: Empics

Scotland show their mean side

PHIL SHAW

If football is a religion then Craig Brown is one of its fundamentalists. He cannot drive past a park game without stopping to affirm his faith. And where others perceive only bleakness, he finds satisfaction and solace.

So it was that Brown, while wise enough not to claim that his team's 1-0 defeat of Australia might one day feature on the Match of the Nineties video, was quick to accentuate the positive aspects. Unfortunately for the 21,000 at Hampden Park, chief among stepping goals.

England's low scorers be warned: Scotland are piling up clean sheets faster than a de-iced Holiday Inn. After leading only three goals in 12 games in qualifying for the European Championship finals, they recorded "yet another", as

their manager proudly proclaimed it, against Australia. Nor was it a feat to be sniffed at. Brown insisted, citing the Soccerex improving pedigree. This exemplary Scottish meanness is due in significant part to Jim Leighton. For the 37-year-old goalkeeper, reborn with Hibernian, Wednesday's shut-out was his 36th in 72 internationals, and he produced what Brown termed "a wonderful save" early in the second half to improve his tally.

Australia's Mark Bosnich, probably among the top 10 in the planet in Leighton's position, said: "That's the hallmark of a quality keeper; staying involved when you don't have much to do. It was like a game of slow chess, but all of a sudden Jim had to make a great save. In almost their next attack Ally McCoist scored, so the game turned on that moment."

The Aston Villa keeper was intrigued by Scotland's ap-

proach, which confounded his image of the game north of the wall. "They seemed to play within themselves and were more patient than I expected. I thought they'd work the flanks and get in more crosses."

Having said that, Bosnich noted with a rueful smile, the winner stemmed from just such a centre. Brown, asked whether the goal had clinched McCoist's ticket to Euro 96, said he would "reserve judgement", but added: "Getting a header like that past a world-class keeper hasn't done him any harm."

McCoist's place may be assured anyway. As unofficial entertainment officer, he is good for squad morale, and his knack of conjuring goals in tight contests could yet be invaluable. "We want to know what his Lottery numbers are," Brown said. "The success he has, it can't be long before he wins that too."

Of the other fringe forwards,

Kevin Gallacher did most to enhance his prospects, not only by supplying the crucial cross but because he showed a com-mo-dity scarce among Brown's options: scorching pace. John Spencer was less conspicuous, though he was praised for his versatility.

As a dummy run for the tactical battles ahead, however, the game's value was questionable. Australia and the Netherlands may operate similar defensive systems, but the Dutch use theirs as a springboard for attack rather than to stifle the opposition.

Brown expects a "much stiffer test" in next month's Copenhagen friendly against Denmark, the European champions. He may also be heartened to hear that Bosnich believes Scotland will be "dangerous opposition in the finals, especially if anyone underestimates them", and predicts that they could well reach the second phase.

Barrow buried under deluge of problems

Non-League notebook
RUPERT METCALF

Barrow, once members of the Football League but now struggling to climb out of the Uni-Bond League, have endured a bad couple of weeks. They have lost a manager, two directors due to outside commitments and, worst of all, they have learned that they will not be accepted back in to the GM Vauxhall Conference, should they finish in a promotion position.

Tony Hesketh resigned as manager last week to become assistant manager at Morecambe. Yesterday Graham Barrow, formerly in charge at Wigan and Chester, turned down the job, so caretakers Neil McDonald and Frank Ventre carry on.

Fourth-placed Barrow are ineligible for promotion to the Conference not because their Holker Street ground is inadequate - they open a new stand, against Walsford tomorrow - but because they did not submit sufficient financial details to the Conference in time.

The UniBond League lead-

ers, Bamber Bridge, and third-placed Hyde did not apply because of their grounds. Second-placed Boston United did not supply any financial details to the Conference.

Rushden & Diamonds, six points clear in the Beazer Homes League, and second-placed Halesowen Town, have been approved by the Conference, as have five Isis League teams: Hayes (the leaders), Enfield, Yeovil, Kingstons and Boreham Wood. Promotion is open to champions or runners-up in all three feeder leagues.

Football

The English League has followed the Premier League by moving the season's final programme of First Division fixtures to Sunday 5 May (10pm kick-off).

INTERNATIONAL. FRIDAY (22.00 GMT): Brazil Olympic team (2-0) vs. Argentina Olympic team (0-1). Brazil Olympic team (2-0) vs. Argentina Olympic team (0-1).

EUROPEAN LEAGUES. BIRMINGHAM: Birmingham City 1-0 Aston Villa. Birmingham City 1-0 Aston Villa.

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Benn back in business

Boxing

Nigel Benn yesterday ended one of the shortest retirements in history while dismissing any chance of a third fight against Chris Eubank.

"There's no grudge match between me and Eubank. It will never happen," the 32-year-old Benn said. "I'm not going to go out a loser," he added. "I still have it in me. I'm hungry to go back. I feel naked without my belt."

Benn is being lined up to challenge Ireland's World Boxing Organisation champion, Steve Collins, in late June, probably in England. There will be no warm-up bouts following his World Boxing Council title defeat to "Sugar Boy" Malinga in Newcastle 26 days ago, after which he announced his retirement.

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SPORTING DIGEST

Football

EUROPEAN LEAGUES. BIRMINGHAM: Birmingham City 1-0 Aston Villa. Birmingham City 1-0 Aston Villa.

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iam 'The Fridge' Perry take on the Scottish Claymores, April 14th

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MONARCHS

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SPORT

CASEY SEEKS A PLACE IN THE SUN

Ken Jones meets the Grand National trainer of Rough Quest page 28

Peschisolido's return enlivens quiet deadline day

Football

GUY HODGSON

Transfer deadline day, traditionally a fevered rush to get players registered, passed with almost eerie tranquillity yesterday. Typical of the mood, the one record that was broken belonged to non-League Rushden & Diamonds.

The total amount of money exchanging hands was less than £5m which concurs with the less

than dramatic trend of recent years and the highest price was the £1.4m Manchester City paid for the Georgian international striker Mikhail Kavelashvili.

The prize for the most intriguing move went to Paul Peschisolido whose £600,000 transfer from Stoke went through two minutes before the 5pm deadline. His destination is Birmingham City and his wife-cum-managing director, Karen Brady.

Other than that the highest

profile transfer was at Blackburn Rovers, where the manager Ray Harford took his

spending in the past week to past £4m by signing Grimsby Town's Gary Croft. The 22-year-old defender, who can play either as a left-back or central defender, cost an initial £1m, which could rise by another £700,000, and follows the £3.2m purchase of Garry Flitcroft from Manchester City.

Strangely, the chief activity centred at a place where trans-

fers were pursued but none took place. Leeds United turned down a £3.5m bid for Gary Speed from Everton and a £1m deal for Rod Wallace to rejoin Southampton fell through.

Speed, 26 and a boyhood Everton fan, has been the subject of enquiries from Goodison before but yesterday's bid was the firmest and most substantial. It is understood that Joe Royle's offer made it past the "no chance" stage of negotia-

tion to the Leeds board where it was rejected partly because of a fear of fans' reaction in the wake of the Coca-Cola Cup final defeat. Even so, Howard Wilkinson, who has vowed to stay on as manager, is planning a clear-out.

"I have never been a quitter. I have never run away from a problem in my life and I don't intend running away from this one," Wilkinson said.

Southampton's interest in Wallace, which broke down be-

cause of the player's reluctance to return to The Dell, conformed to type as there was transfer activity at the bottom of the Premiership. Bolton paid Bradford City £300,000 for goalkeeper Gavin Ward while West Ham also bought a new goalkeeper, Australian Steve Mautone, from Canberra Cosmos for £30,000. In the First Division, Charlton collected £250,000 by selling Kim Grant to Luton.

As for Rushden & Diamonds,

the Beazer Homes league leaders paid a non-League record of £85,000 to the GM Vauxhall Conference club, Kettering, for striker Carl Alford.

YESTERDAY'S LEADING TRANSFERS: Mikhail Kavelashvili, Stoke to Manchester City, £1.4m; Gary Croft, Grimsby to Blackburn, £1m; Paul Peschisolido, Stoke to Birmingham, £600,000; Gavin Ward, Bradford to Bolton, £300,000; Kim Grant, Charlton to Luton, £250,000; Paul Cook, Coventry to Tranmere, £250,000; Carl Gammie, Portsmouth to the Borough, £225,000; Giancarlo Casanova, Cambridge to Plymouth, £200,000; Scott Taylor, Millwall to Bolton, £150,000; David Lowe, Leicester to Wigan, £125,000; Anthony Gallimore, Carlisle to Grimsby, £125,000; Steve Cowie, Ayrton Villa to Sharnford, £100,000; Mark on Gray, Sunderland to Oxford, £100,000.

Williams dispute Senna findings

Motor racing

Patrick Head, the technical chief of Williams Formula One team, has disputed the official findings of the inquiry into the death of Ayrton Senna at the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix at Imola which blames steering failure for the fatal accident.

The report says the steering column on the three-times world champion's Williams suffered metal fatigue and only a small part of it was intact when he lost control of the car and crashed into a wall. Head disputes that. "We haven't had the opportunity to look at any of the parts properly, but if [the conclusion] would not tie in with the data we have from the car," he said.

He said in an interview with Autosport magazine that he is not questioning the expertise of those who compiled the report, but he added: "The technical report states in black and white that the data on the car indicates that the steering was working correctly at the time of impact. And then at the end it says the car must have gone off the track because the driver couldn't steer. It doesn't try to say how the data does not tie in with their judgement."

The inquiry's findings have yet to be published, but Professor Enrico Lorenzini, chairman of the official investigating commission, has confirmed its contents.

Head concedes that there must have been fatigue cracks in the steering column of Senna's car. "The people who did the material analysis are too capable to identify cracks and for there not to be cracks there," he says.

Noting that many jumbo jets fly despite showing fatigue cracks, he said it was a matter of "whether they are present to the extent to actually put a component at risk."

Head was at pains to quash rumours that a modification to the car's steering column had contributed to the accident. He said it had been done 10 days before the season started and scrutinised after the Pacific Grand Prix, when the car had been hit by Nicola Larini's.

"The steering column was subjected to a very careful fatigue crack detection in the factory and no cracks were found on it," he said.

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Emburey out of running for England post

Cricket

DAVID LLEWELLYN

John Emburey has pulled out of the running for the job of England coach. The 43-year-old former England and Middlesex off-spinner, who was believed to have been the choice of Ray Illingworth, the chairman of selectors, informed the Test and County Cricket Board of his decision yesterday.

That leaves the way clear for the other two contenders: the favourite, David Lloyd, who is in Jamaica on Lancashire's pre-season tour; and Phil Neale, Warwickshire's director of coaching.

Neale, 41, who captained Worcestershire to successive County Championship wins in 1988 and 1989, said yesterday from Cape Town, where he is helping Warwickshire prepare for their pre-season tour, that he wants the job. "I would love to be involved in the England set-up in some way," he said.

The TCCB chairman, Dennis Silk, had announced that a decision would be made by this evening, but that is not guaranteed. With two of the leading candidates out of the country it may not be possible, although after the last 10 days or so no one should be surprised at anything after this latest episode in the soap opera of English cricket.

The weekly serial will no doubt throw up another twist next week.

But unlike David Graveney's exit from the election for chair-

man of selectors, Emburey was not put under any pressure by anyone else. He has just taken up a four-year post as coach to Northamptonshire, believed to be worth a total of £200,000. The TCCB, who approached Emburey on Tuesday to establish whether he was willing to be considered for the post, have made it clear that the England coach's job will be just for the summer. Even if it paid £30,000 for those six months, it would not make financial sense for Emburey to accept it on those terms when there is so much more security with Northamptonshire, who said that they would not have stood in Emburey's way had he been offered the job.

Lloyd, at 49 is the oldest of the candidates and he is believed to be on a short-term contract with Lancashire, so the brevity of the England deal would probably not worry him unduly, particularly since it is likely that Lancashire would leave his job open for him if Lloyd failed to produce the goods. A major factor in his favour is that if Lloyd were offered the job it might well influence Michael Atherton to stay on as England captain, and Lord's want that very much particularly since there is no obvious successor.

Illingworth did not want to comment on Emburey's decision, which was announced through his new county. In the statement Emburey, who last night flew to South Africa for

a 12-day pre-season tour with Northamptonshire, said: "While being very honoured and flattered at being considered by the TCCB's executive committee I have decided after due and careful thought, that I do not wish to be put forward as a candidate."

"I feel at this stage of my career that I would benefit from gaining more experience in a cricket management and coaching role. Having gained that necessary experience I would be better qualified to serve England. It is my fervent desire and ambition to work with the international team at some time in the future and I fully appreciate the experience of managing the England A team on their recent tour of Pakistan."

Unlike Emburey, who played 64 times for England, Neale has no Test experience, but he said: "I took England A to South Africa and India and it didn't stop me doing a good job. I didn't think I was lacking anything when it came to knowledge of cricket."

Meanwhile David Afield announced the make-up of his six-man working party which has been set up to look into the running of the national team. The Essex chairman has called on two former England captains, David Gower and Mike Gatting, who will be joined by the Lancashire chairman, Bob Bennett, Micky Stewart, who was England's first manager from 1986 to 1992, and Tim Lamb, the TCCB's assistant secretary.



Jamie Osborne tumbles from Black Humour in the Martell Cup Chase at Aintree yesterday, breaking his collarbone and missing the winning mount in the next race, Ask Tom. Report and results, page 29; photograph, Allsport

Agassi's audacity thrills

JOHN ROBERTS

reports from Key Biscayne

Steffi Graf is one match from winning the Lipton Championship for a fifth time, having defeated the American Lindsay Davenport, 6-4, 6-4, in the semi-finals here yesterday.

Continuing the dominant form which has marked her matches, the Wimbledon champion swiftly ended the eighth-seeded Davenport's hopes of building on her encouraging performance against Graf in the last four of the event in Indian Wells, California, a week earlier. Graf will now play either Chanda Rubin, the American sixth seed, or the unseeded Karina Habudova, of Slovakia.

Yannick Noah patented a spectacular trick shot played through the legs which has become a challenge to would-be imitators. When it comes off, spectators love it, and Andre Agassi made their day en route to the men's semi-finals.

Running towards the back of the court in pursuit of a lob from Michael Joyce, Agassi improvised a winner into the far corner which astonished his American compatriot. "Never in a million years did I think he would ever come close to making it," Joyce said.

It is doubtful that Key Biscayne has heard such a roar of appreciation, and the defending champion bowed to one and all. "Shots like that make it hard to retire," Agassi said. "Down the road you think back at moments like that and you think, 'Wow, pretty exciting.'"

Not that the 25-year-old Agassi is creaking towards the rocking chair. He intends to add to the stockpile of memories, and believes that his debut at the Olympic Games in Atlanta in July will rank among the best.

Four years ago, he was too far down the world rankings, at No 12, to be selected for the Barcelona Olympics, which took place only weeks after his triumph at Wimbledon.

Agassi defeated Joyce, 6-4, 6-1, and the cameo occurred in the third game of the second set. Asked if such wizardry was likely to break an opponent's spirit, he said: "I think it pisses them off more than anything."

Joyce, a 23-year-old Californian, ranked No 71 in the world, simply marvelled at Agassi's audacity, and it is a fair bet that the Las Vegas semi-final opponent, Arnaud Boetsch, would do the same.

The personable Frenchman's approach to his match in the quarter-finals delighted the crowd, who became impatient with Jim Courier's petulance. While the Floridian squandered all but four of 24 break points, and glowered at the line-judges, Boetsch took his three chances and enjoyed himself.

Boetsch, the No 15 seed, has encountered Agassi once before, losing, 6-3, 6-2, 6-0, in the third round of the 1990 French Open, the American going on to be defeated by Andres Gomez in the final.

Orrell lose Healey to Leicester

Rugby Union

STEVE BALE

How convenient that Austin Healey should be in Hong Kong for this weekend's international events and so miss Orrell's pioneering four-mile journey to Wigan to play the champions, Leicester, tomorrow - because yesterday the Lancashire club announced the loss of their England A scrum-half to... Leicester.

Healey's absence, albeit diplomatic, from this match alone is bad enough but his permanent loss is much, much worse for a club anxiously seeking resources to fund the new

professionalism next season. The converted wing, at 22 an exceptional prospect, has agreed a three-year contract from next season with his new club.

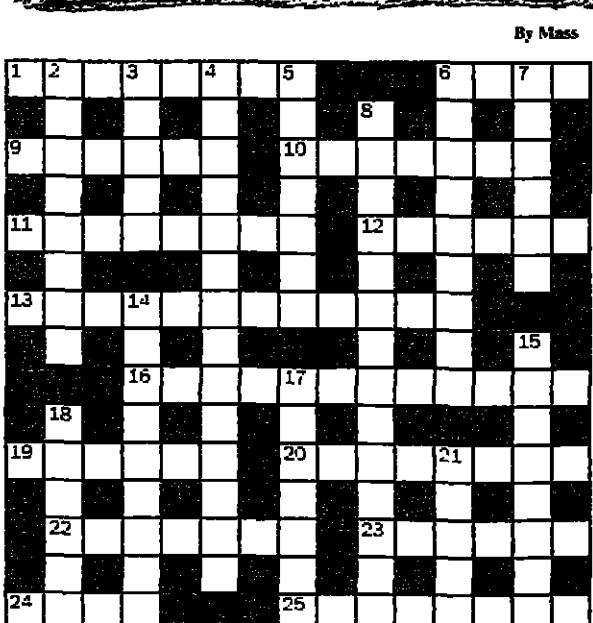
Not that Leicester have yet announced their own plans for funding the new dispensation but a membership of 14,000 gives them a head start and anyway, as Peter Williams, Orrell's rugby director, dolefully acknowledged, Healey will be only the latest in a line of high-quality ex-Orrell players. He joined the club from Waterloo in 1994.

"Austin has signed for Leicester to better his chances of playing for England and I have no qualms about his motives at

all," said Williams, whose personal experience, like Healey's, includes leaving Orrell to take up a contract on offer elsewhere - though in 1988 it was rugby league that paid the wages. "It looks as though we are always going to lose good players but that's the way of things."

A job is what rugby union is about to become to its leading practitioners - hence Healey's move. Mark Ring, the former Wales stand-off, is already in rugby by employment as West Hartlepool's player-coach and he will make his league debut against Saracens tomorrow, too late to save West from relegation unless it transpires that there is none.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD in association with



By Mass Thursday's solution

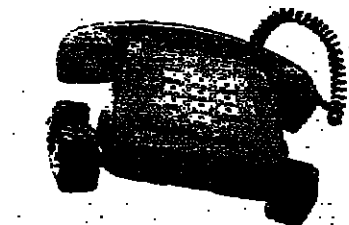
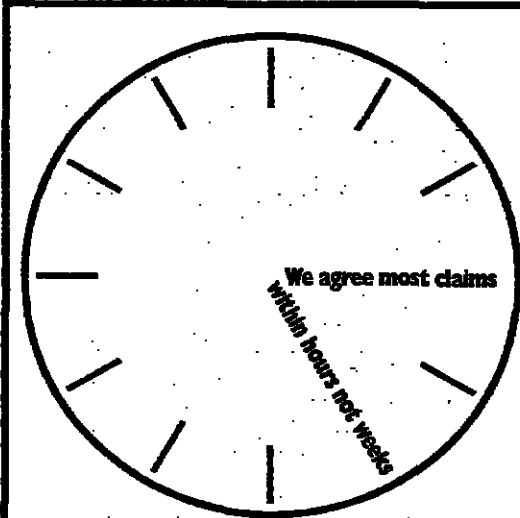
- ACROSS
- Pad out supporting essay (8)
 - Incisive, about to lance hand (4)
 - Hybrid is beginning to transmute further (6)
 - One in arrears consequently entered as 10a? (7)
 - Issues left in Red China, mostly resolved (8)
 - Gilt-edged items? (6)
 - Supple, our Tim - flexible, very adaptable (5-7)
 - Cut? Yes and no (4-8)
 - A row in the Strand? (6)
 - Enjoyed the reception? (8)
 - Losing a thou, plays on - just for the thrill of it? (7)
 - East Europeans reportedly at point in pass (6)
 - Man's vocalised song (4)
 - Ghoulish set in original chiller (8)

- DOWN
- Occasion for a jam session, perhaps (4,4)
 - Women in work producing fabric (5)
 - Defender accommodating North's heretical student of evolution (14)
 - Fine, comparatively speaking, leaves one solvent (7)
 - Alert everyone about hazardous ramble (5,3)
 - Is timber incorporated in these models? (6)
 - Dry State? (14)
 - Orchestrator's approach reduced bright tone colour, we hear (9)
 - Mishap with switch (8)
 - Quell racket (the Mafia-type) in violent scene (7)
 - Oppressive humbug - ultimate in tyranny (6)
 - English lad's set up dodge (5)

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